

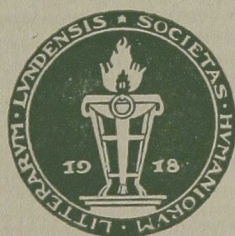
ACTA

REG. SOCIETATIS HUMANIORUM LITTERARUM LUNDENSIS  
Skrifter utgivna av Kungl. Humanistiska Vetenskapssamfundet i Lund

LXI

*Anna Birgitta Rooth*

# LOKI IN SCANDINAVIAN MYTHOLOGY



LUND CWK GLEERUP



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[1961]

BY

ANNA BIRGITTA ROTH



LUND  
C. W. K. GLEERUPS FÖRLAG

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CARL BLOMS BOKTRYCKERI A.-B.

*TO*

*GÖSTA ROOTH*



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## PREFACE

Preliminary studies to this work were begun in 1952 and appeared later as a series of lectures in 1954 and 1958. The translation into English was sponsored by Statens Humanistiska Forskningsråd and made by lektor Gordon Elliot.

I have to express heartfelt thanks to professor K. G. Ljunggren for reading the book in manuscript and making useful suggestions and to professor Sigfrid Svensson for friendly interest and encouragement during many years.

Lund, Institute of Ethnology and Folklore, 2 April 1961

*Anna Birgitta Rooth*





## INTRODUCTION

As one or a few stanzas of an Old Norse poem often give rise to an extensive treatise or even a book, it may seem that too many Old Norse poems have been subjected to a too compressed treatment. I have been forced to limit myself to those parts which deal with the Old Norse god Loki, concentrating on the sequence of events in the story and on the epic composition of the motifs. I have had to rely on the interpretations of the texts made by the philologist as well as on their datings. As is always the case in the humanities these interpretations are not unequivocal; this particularly refers to the interpretations of the poems and their dating.

Because of limited space it has been impossible to publish all the original texts, but only those most important for the present analyses. Texts from Snorri's Edda have been taken from the last edition by Anne Holtsmark and Jón Helgason and their notes have also been quoted.

The surveys of the motifs ought to have introduced their different chapters respectively. For technical reasons this was not possible and they had to be inserted independently, as conveniently as possible, in the first parts of the chapters.

As regards the modern material, to which only general references are made in the chapter Loki, Locke and the Net, I have used the collections of the ethnological archives in Sweden. I have also consulted corresponding archives in the Scandinavian countries.

The chapter about the trickster figure is based on the material

collated in connection with an investigation of the creation myths of the North American Indians.

It may seem that the different chapters have been very differently treated and that some parts have been allotted an importance out of proportion. This depends partly upon the availability of material of different types, partly upon what earlier research has considered important and which I therefore have had to take into account; and, finally, it depends upon what I myself have considered to be of particular importance for the interpretation of the whole Loki problem.

For instance, the mistletoe has been considered most important by earlier scholars who have interpreted it as a symbol connected with a fertility cult. Some new light has been brought on the part that the mistletoe plays in the myth by the publication of material which is intended to change this interpretation of the mistletoe. In the course of this presentation this detail-motif has received attention which under other circumstances would be out of proportion. The Baldr myth is also dealt with extensively because it has been considered fundamental to the understanding of the Loki character, the Baldr myth having been considered a cult myth or a ritual myth. In contradiction to this I have endeavoured to show that the Baldr myth is nothing but a common Mediaeval story. But already because of its length and its heterogenous composition the Baldr myth requires special attention. In return it has been possible to treat other myths more sparingly.

It may seem that the most diverse provinces have been treated. Yes, admittedly this is so, but it all depends upon the fact that the Loki figure appears in the most diverse circumstances and in a most heterogenous material. As it has been my definite intention to comment as far as possible on the manifold differences in all the pieces of literary work which have been attached to the Loki figure my book will have the same divided appearance as the

kaleidoscopic Loki figure itself. I have therefore felt it justified to conclude the different parts and chapters with several short summaries, as each separate part is quite unconnected with the others beyond the fact that these heterogeneous stories all have been attached to the same leading figure — Loki.

Because of the diversity of the material, it appeared necessary to add a concluding chapter giving a synthesis of the different results and collecting them under “*Conclusion and General Summary.*”



## HISTORY AND METHODS

In a number of articles published in *Danske Studier* Axel Olrik has treated the Scandinavian tradition of Loki. In 1905 in "Tordenguden og hans dreng" Olrik compares an Estonian myth of the Thunder God's stolen instrument of thunder with Þórr's stolen hammer in the *Þrymskviða* and reaches the conclusion that Loki, son of the God of Thunder or his servant, is identical with Þjálfí, Þórr's follower in Old Norse mythology. In two essays entitled "Loke i nyere folkeoverlevering", *Danske Studier*, 1908, I. De vestlige nybygder, pp. 193—207; 1909, II. De gammelnordiske lande, pp. 69—84, Olrik offers a collection of material, mainly modern in character, derived from the popular oral tradition of the Faeroes, Iceland, the Shetland Islands, Denmark, Sweden, and Norway. Olrik concludes that Loki is a goblin, a gnome, associated with fire and similar phenomena and that his character of liar and thief accords well with the picture given of him in Old Norse literature.

In a later essay, "Myterne om Loke", in *Festskrift til H. F. Feilberg*, 1911, p. 573 ff., Olrik gives a summary and a synthesis of the earlier works and presents a development of the Loki myths, assigning them on geographical grounds to the East Scandinavians and the West Scandinavians. The results reached by Olrik are wholly unexpected compared with the views he expressed on earlier occasions. This new concept of the person of Loki is probably due to the fact that Olrik, as he himself remarks on p. 592, had read Fr. van der Leyens "Odensmjödet" and "Ger-



manische Mythologie".<sup>1</sup> Behind the cycles of myths of Þórr-Loki and Óðinn-Loki he traces an older layer of ancestral myths which can be included in a larger ethnological context of myths of the catch, as in fact Fr. van der Leyen claimed. Olrik moreover takes the view that Loki is the servant of the Thunder God and also a fire demon, just as the ill-natured Loki is a concept created by the Goths during the Migration Period and subsequently absorbed into the Old Norse tradition.

Olrik's final contribution on this subject consists partly of review of H. Celander's "Lokes mytiske ursprung" and E. N. Setälä's "Louhi und ihre verwandten", partly of a paper in collaboration with Grüner Nielsen, "Loeke, Lodder i flamsk folketrio". These are to be found in *Danske Studier*, 1912, pp. 87—101 under the title "Efterslaet til Loke-myterne".

Contemporaneously with Olrik, the Swedish scholar Hilding Celander was working on the modern popular tradition of Loki, the results of which appeared in 1911 in the publication of "Lokes mytiska ursprung". Celander's essential contribution lay in the pointing out of the word for the spider — *Locke* — and the expression *lockasnara* or *lockanät* in Götaland, i.e., Southern Sweden, which he associated with Loki on the grounds that skill in weaving suggested dwarflike traits. Another name for the spider's web (*spindelnät*) is the *dwarf's net* (*dvärganät*), and Celander therefore concluded that Loki, inventor of the net, was a *dwarf*. Even the association of the name Loki with the old word *luka*, to place under lock, to confine, was interpreted by Celander as typical of the Loki figure, the one who places under lock, confines, in mountains, in or under the earth, thus providing further evidence that Loki was a supernatural or a ctonic being. Celander arrives at the conclusion that Loki was originally a mountain spirit, a brownie or a gnome involved in the worship of the dead.

In 1931 there appeared E. J. Gras's thesis, "De Noordse Loki-Mythen in hun onderling verband". Gras is of the opinion that the myths of the ill-natured Loki and their internal relationship

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<sup>1</sup> I don't know of any papers with these titles by v. d. Leyen. Probably Olrik meant a treatise by KUHN, *Herabkunft des Feuers und des Göttertrankes* which was referred to by v. d. LEYEN in *Die Götter und Göttersagen der Germanen* p. 222 ff.

cannot explain his original character. They are, in fact, so full of "folklore motifs" that they cannot be used for the investigation of a religious phenomenon. But, in spite of all these folklore motifs, Gras concludes that Loki was a versatile demon and inventor. Her picture of Loki has then been based precisely on these same "folklore" motifs, since they constitute the only sources of information concerning Loki. And, this is what I would like to stress: if one draws Loki's character from this material, one has *accepted* the material and this must accordingly be assessed in terms of its genre — as traditional fiction — and not primarily as material of the history of religion. In spite of the folklore nature of the material, Gras arrives at the conclusion that the association with Óðinn must be very ancient, whereas that with Þórr must be a literary creation. Gras does not therefore accept Olrik's theory of Loki as the servant of the Thunder God nor does she accept the association of Loki with fire. Gras, however, links Loki with a new element — water, since popular tradition in the Low Countries — as Olrik and Grüner Nielsen pointed out — takes account of a water spirit called Kludde or Lodder. In his character of such a being Loki belongs to the West Germanic tribes no less than he does to the Scandinavians. The name Logapörr on a brooch from Nordendorf is, according to Gras, additional evidence of his existence even in Germany.

Much credit is due to Gras for her systematic compilation of the various Icelandic sources and the numerous quotations, which have been lacking in earlier works.

In 1933 Jan de Vries' "The Problem of Loki" was published. The essentially new feature of de Vries' investigation is a criticism of the source material as the primary condition for further analysis. The most striking feature is de Vries' critical attitude to the material: this applies no less to the Old Norse myths than to the information derived from the oral tradition. This objective attempt to test the possibilities of the material before drawing the conclusions is most praiseworthy and, as always, one reads de Vries' perceptive work with pleasure. Views expressed earlier of Loki as a trickster, a culture hero, an ancestor, have — thanks to de Vries' thorough work — been brought forward in evidence.

de Vries believes that the Icelandic myths from the time of the introduction of Christianity have undergone three different stages as the result of Christian influence: 1. a period, uninfluenced by Christianity, characterised by heathen mythological tradition, of genuine belief; and 2. a period of suppression by Christian forces of faith and myth, followed by 3. a secondary flowering of the myths in corrupt form.

This theory, which in itself can appear reasonable enough, can however easily lead to unreasonable consequences. de Vries has chosen to date the texts according to a chronological scheme corresponding to the three stages of 1. faith, 2. suppression and 3. secondary, corrupt flowering. The difficult problem is how to determine which myths represent the oldest stage, the genuine heathen belief, as well as to determine those affected by Christianity and those, finally, that are the new flowerings and corrupt myths. This theory can scarcely be proved. What one can say is only this: all the known texts stem from a time when Christianity was in a position more generally to affect tradition. To what extent this is the case and to what extent a "heathen corrupt flowering" has taken place can hardly be proved in this schematic way. Here it is a case of a subjective classification of the types of the myths with reference to their *content*, since it is unfortunately impossible at present to determine the internal relationships of the texts entirely in terms of linguistic analyses. It would, naturally, be of value to obtain the chronology of the texts by means of palaeographical or orthographical research. Even if this could possibly be carried out, without establishing a dubious evaluation as to what elements of the contents of the texts could be termed primary, and what secondary, it would still not indicate that the oldest texts represent a more ancient tradition than the myths contained in the later texts. Such an interpretation is natural when one is working with texts and manuscripts and it is necessary to determine the internal relationship of the documents. In many cases a philologist can determine with great precision the internal relationship between various texts originating from a definite prototype. To introduce into the province of general ethnology this method, rightly applicable to philological material.

is unfortunately not practicable. To the scholar who is working on ethnological material, modern myths and data constitute evidence no less than earlier written myths. The oldest texts of the myths cannot merely be accepted as representing the original tradition just because they happen to be the earliest to be written down. The comparative investigation of material is that which decides whether the older texts or the modern material represents the original form. There are examples of earlier texts that do not always represent the original; the modern material in certain cases has preserved the older tradition.

This attempt to determine the oldest texts and thereby the oldest representations of Loki even appears in de Vries' attitude to the modern oral tradition.

Finally we must mention the popular lore of our own time. As might be expected these modern traditions about Loki are not very numerous; we might even wonder, that there are really any traditions at all. because, as far as we can see, Loki was in the heathen period a deity, well known in mythological tales, but not venerated in a public or private cult. Hence the question may be put: do the modern Loki-traditions root in genuine heathen belief and practice, and if so, we must try to understand the relation between this modern demoniac being and the heathen deity, who show a different character in almost every respect. We will not follow the way of Axel Olrik and Celander in our investigation, who treat modern traditions as equivalent and even superior to the documents of the heathen period, because we think it methodically objectionable to explain the religious representations of one period by those of another. This holds still more true in the present case, where the gulf of the conversion to Christianity lies between both periods. The only possible way seems to me to scrutinize the extant Old-Norse material and if the conclusions, we arrive at, are in any way concordant with the modern popular tradition, we may consider it as a nice confirmation of our deductions. If, on the contrary, our results do not agree with it, we must not try to mend them by the use of the popular material, but we must seek for the solution of the quite independant problem of the origin of the modern folk-lore traditions about Loki.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> DE VRIES, *The Problem of Loki* p. 27.

de Vries states that the modern traditions about Loki are not many and that the modern demonic creature and heathen god Loki shows "a different character in almost every respect". This is true inasmuch as Loki figures in myths and tales only in Old Norse literature, not in modern tradition. In the modern Scandinavian tradition there are no *narratives* about Loki — only numerous sayings and terms connected with the Loki figure. A number of the sayings and proverbs associated with the Loki figure show, however, the part he has played and the popularity he has enjoyed in the popular tradition. Here one cannot speak of a small amount of material, but if one compares the paucity of sources in Old Norse literature with the number of sayings connected with Loki in the modern tradition, the oral tradition can boast of far richer material in regard to quantity. Although eight hundred years have passed since the god Loki was first mentioned in literature, even then apparently a popular and ancient, well-known "deity", the sayings about him have been preserved down to our own day. One may safely claim that the great variety of allusions to the Loki figure far surpass the modern material preserved in the case of the other Asa gods, who, unlike Loki, had their own cults and places of worship. Thus, for example, the modern material yields very little information concerning the Óðinn figure — a lot of data derived from a stereotype legend on the subject of Óðinn's Hunt does not bring us much closer to the Óðinn figure itself. But still, in the information to be derived from the Hunt, which is described like a whistling in the air, there is an allusion to Óðinn as the God of the Wind.

de Vries adopts a sceptical attitude towards the modern oral tradition. He does not want to follow Olrik and Celander, who treat the modern tradition as of equal value, even superior to documents from heathen times, because he considers it to be methodically objectionable to explain religious representations of one period in terms of those of another. That Olrik and Celander found the modern material superior to that of the Old Norse is an exaggeration on the part of de Vries. On the contrary, they regarded the ancient and contemporary material as being of equal value. It must be regarded as inevitable that attention should be paid to the modern material in order to discover what agreements

and what differences can be found, before one is in a position to adopt an attitude towards the definitive solution. de Vries considers that the only possible way is, first, carefully to investigate the Old Norse material and, subsequently, draw conclusions. If these should appear to agree with the modern material, this may be regarded as "a nice confirmation" of the conclusions so drawn. If, on the other hand, the results do not agree with the modern tradition, "we must not try to mend them by the use of the popular material, but we must seek for the quite independent problem of the origin of the modern folklore traditions about Loki».

If the popular tradition appears to differ from the Old Norse, one obviously seeks, as far as possible, to ascertain in what way and for what reason, it differs from the older material. It seems to me illogical to accept the modern tradition merely in cases it may agree with the Old Norse material and reject it where it happens to differ. Either one must accept the material as well in cases where it agrees as in cases where it differs, or else one must be consistent and refrain from regarding points of agreement as "a nice confirmation".

To lay down as an *a priori* condition that the older material gives a more reliable picture of the Loki figure and to determine this picture before regard is paid to the modern material, where this is to be found, cannot — in my opinion — be correct. The Old Norse and the modern materials must, in both cases, be investigated and to that extent the material may be of equal value. Naturally regard must be paid to the factors of space and time which divide the Old Norse from the modern material and to what extent this can have undergone special transformations. Another problem is to what extent the Old Norse skalds have been affected by literary, ancient and/or Christian traditions.

When de Vries speaks about the modern material ("... if the conclusions we arrive at, are in any way concordant with the modern popular tradition, we may consider it as a nice confirmation of our deductions"), one must remember that the modern material is not homogeneous, no more so in fact than the Old Norse data about Loki. The fact is that the modern material about Loki is very varied in character, just as the Old Norse myths are

different from one another and contradictory. It is a matter of bringing together this richly varied material from Old Norse mythology and the equally varied contemporary sayings about Loki in order to see what agreements are to be found and in what respects. The material in its entirety must be investigated unconditionally before an assessment of the material can be carried out with reference to those traits which may be constitutive in Loki.

George Dumézil's work, "Loki", appeared in 1948. Of special importance is Dumézil's bringing together of Ossetian myths about Syrdon and myths about the Loki figure. Far from convincing, however, is the bringing together of the myths of Soslan-Sosrykos and the Old Norse myth of Baldr, which have nothing more in common than the motif of invulnerability usual in heroic tales. In the Ossetian myths Dumézil does not see an association with the Scandinavian, merely an independent parallel which is not obliged to stand in any genetical relationship. What he means is that it is a question of the spontaneous rise of two structurally similar religious complexes, one in the Caucasus, the other in Scandinavia. The explanation of the structural similarity is not merely that the same cultural and social organisation prevailed in the Caucasus and Scandinavia, but that the *idea* of a particular divine *character*, Syrdon or Loki, was found in both areas.

It appears as though the old ideas about the spontaneous development underlie these ideas current in modern research on structural and phenomenological forms in different provinces of community life. Dumézil does not bring forward any historical views regarding the material. He doubts whether the Loki material can, on the whole, be placed in a religious-historical context. The intention is, for example, to compare similar religious customs or representations in order to show that the "phenomenon" is natural and constitutive. One shows that the phenomenon is in itself constitutive by comparing it with a similar phenomenon found in another geographical region. In this way the problem is solved: the phenomenon is "natural", it is "*constitutive*" as a phenomenon because it occurs in two different geographical areas. One must remember, however, that the phenomenon has been wrenched loose from all the other "phenomena" within the two geographical areas. This method takes for granted that no his-

torical association exists. This is however a problem which finally concerns the question of *historical cultural connections* or *spontaneous developments*, delicate questions which can be more suitably treated in another context.

In his latest published monograph. "Loki. Ein mythologisches Problem (1956)", Folke Ström, who treats Dumézil's theories, reacts against the negative attitude adopted by Dumézil

die mythische Persönlichkeit Lokis religionsGESCHICHTLICH zu deuten. Dass gewisse komplexe mythische Typen sozusagen fix und fertig und, ohne dass sie einer kultischen Funktion entsprechen, einer angeblichen sozialen, in verschiedenen Kulturkreisen vorkommenden Situation entsprungen sind, ist kein überzeugender Gedanke (Ström p. 6).

Even if Dumézil's views, worthy of consideration as they are in many respects, do not offer any solution to the problem of Loki, Ström is of the opinion that

eine Rückkehr zur herkömmlichen Methode ist andererseits selbstverständlich ausgeschlossen. Vereinzelte Züge oder Eigenschaften dürfen nicht der Ausgangspunkt für eine Deutung sein.

In this one must unconditionally accept Ström's views. Ström says, entirely correctly, on p. 8:

Auch die Theorie, die bis jetzt den grössten Anklang gefunden hat, die Heilbringer- oder Tricksthertheorie — ursprünglich von F. van der Leyen vorgebracht und von J. de Vries vollendet — hält sich an gewisse Züge und sieht von anderen, ebenso wesentlichen Seiten der Persönlichkeit und der Tätigkeit Lokis ab.

If, on the other hand, one joins Folke Ström in regarding the Baldr myth as the central factor in the Loki myths, a still larger part of the material remains unexplained. One has merely taken up *other* "vereinzelte Züge oder Eigenschaften".

In his very interesting study Folke Ström has this to say on method:

Die religionsgeschichtliche Analyse muss auf die ganze mythische Persönlichkeit in ihrer wechselnden Mannigfaltigkeit und Zusammensetzung Rücksicht nehmen. Diese Forderung muss als unvermeidlich betrachtet werden. Was nach einer derartigen Analyse als sicher und vielfach bezeugte, in zuver-



lässigen Quellen wiederkehrende Elemente zurückbleibt, soll grundsätzlich als primäre und mythisch konstitutive Züge beurteilt werden.

The need to study the collected material together with the reliability of the sources constitutes obviously a paramount precondition for the interpretation of the entire material, not merely from the point of view of the history of religion. The surveys given by Ström on pp. 19—20 (based on the poetic parts) and on pp. 46—47 (based on prose accounts) are instructive and enlightening, as is also the synthesis of the summaries which follow on pp. 47—49. Ström's summary of traits in Loki's character is: cunning, duplicity and intelligence, and these traits are consequently constitutive in Loki. In his outward behaviour Loki is foolish. Two important inner traits in his character are duplicity and intelligence, according to Ström. Typical of Loki is his changing of shape. Further, his association with Þórr is dubious — because opposition reigns between them. Hostility of such a kind between Loki and Óðinn is not to be found in the material of the myths and is therefore a constitutive trait. Ström, however, has made no mention of a couple of exceptions: Loki's special position in the Baldr myth and in the Ragnarøk myth, where he is found to be the enemy of all the gods — including Óðinn. Further, in the myth of *Parens Monstrorum*, in which Snorri, having called the roll of all the Asa gods, finally, in a special appendix, speaks of Loki and Loki's progeny. Loki's *special position* with regard to the other gods, which ought, perhaps, to be interpreted as a constitutive characteristic, is evident in the *Þórsdrápa*, *Hymiskviða*, *Lokasenna*, *Húsdrápa*, *Völuspá*. Direct associations with Óðinn are to be found in only four sources: *Haustlong*, *Reginismál*, in the *Andvari* myth (together with *Hœnir*) and in the *Sörlaþáttur*. The association is indirectly hinted at in the *Lokasenna*.

One asks oneself whether the association between Óðinn and Loki is constitutive in the case of the Loki figure because no quarrels of a direct nature are named as existing between them? Is his presence together with Þórr dubious, because Loki does not appear as his friend but as his faithless follower? Why should friendship be primary and enmity secondary?

On this point, it seems to me, that Ström has interpreted the material in favour of the Óðinn-Loki association on insufficient grounds. It is on this over-emphasis given to the part played by Óðinn-Loki that Ström makes further use in fashioning the constellation Óðinn-Loki as a God of Death and Winter.

From the point of view of the history of religion, it would be, of course, most natural to analyse “die ganze mythische *Persönlichkeit* (my italics) in ihrer wechselnden Mannigfaltigkeit und Zusammensetzung”. However, it is open to discussion as to whether one has the right to draw conclusions concerning the *personality* and *characteristic* qualities of a deity such as Loki before one has tested the *nature* of the *material* in which Loki makes his appearance.

de Vries and Ström have based their work on the Loki figure itself as the central factor in the material of the myth — “die mythische Persönlichkeit” — as Ström says. For the religious historian the “character” of this god is obviously the essential, the heart of the problem to be investigated. To reach this goal is difficult as long as one is faced with this presentation of the problem and is obliged to seek through the whole of the material of the myths in order to select those traits that are constitutive in the case of Loki. It is hardly to be wondered at that so many different suggestions for interpretations have been put forward. My intention is to investigate in the Scandinavian material concerning Loki on the one hand those myths or motifs found in Scandinavia alone and on the other hand those which belong to other European traditions.

The myths about Loki form part of *traditional fiction* and it is a matter, first of all, of making clear which *types of myth* can be *Scandinavian* and on that account possibly connected intimately with the Loki figure. This form of the criticism of sources can thus be perfectly reasonably employed; in its way it is as important as the internal chronological tabling of the Old Norse sources. Not until this analyses of the sources has been carried out does one acquire a basis for the study of the constitutive traits of the Loki figure. Even if this may seem to many scholars a too severe sifting of the myth material, it is nevertheless a necessary

condition for a subsequent investigation on lines of a religious-historical nature.

The popular sayings are rich in variation, as are the Old Norse myths about Loki. In the extended investigation it is a matter of bringing together these popular sayings and the sifted, surviving Old Norse myths about Loki in order to discover in what respects agreements and discrepancies can be traced. When I bring together the popular material and the far more ancient Old Norse, it is not in any way to suggest that the modern is more important than the older literary material but because the popular modern material can *sometimes* afford valuable information and cannot, in consequence, be rejected *a priori* as worthless (or of no account where it fails to accord with the Old Norse literary material).

# LOKI IN THE MYTHS OF THE PROVIDER AND RE-PROVIDER

## 1. THE ÞJAZI MYTH

### Text

The Þjazi Myth in Snorra Edda ed. Anne Holtsmark and Jón Helgason pp. 78—80:

Hann hóf þar frásögn at „þrír æsir fóro heiman, Óðinn ok Loki ok Hœnir, ok fóru um fiöll ok eyðimerkr, ok var illt til matar. En er þeir koma ofan í dal nakkvarn, síá þeir øxna flokk ok taka einn uxann ok snúa til seyðis. En er þeir hyggja at soðit mun vera, raufa þeir seyðinn ok var ekki soðit. Ok í annat sinn 5 er þeir raufa seyðinn, þá er stund var liðin ok var ekki soðit, mæla þeir þá sín á milli hveriu þetta mun gegna. Þá heyra þeir mál í eikina upp ifir sik, at sá er þar sat kvaz ráða því er eigi soðnaði á seyðinum. Þeir litu til. ok sat þar orn ok eigi lítill.

Þá mælti orninn: „Vilit þér gefa mér fylli mína af oxanum, 10 þá mun soðna á seyðinum.“ Þeir iáta því. Þá lætr hann sígaz ór trénu ok setz á seyðinn ok leggr upp þegar it fyrsta lær oxans .ii. ok báða bógana. Þá varð Loki reiðr ok greip upp mikla stöng ok reiðir af öllu afli ok rekr á kroppinn erninum. Orninn bregz við hoggit ok flýgr upp; þá var föst stöngin við kropp arnarins, 15 ok hendr Loka við annan enda. Orninn flýgr hátt svá at foetr ⟨Loka⟩ taka niðr griótit ok urðir ok við, en hendr hans hyggr hann at slitna munu ór oxlum. Hann kallar ok biðr allþarflega orninn friðar. en hann segir at Loki skal aldri lauss verða nema hann veiti honum svardaga at koma Iðunni út of Ásgarð með 20

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3 matar] vista WT. 5 í] ÷ WT. raufa] riúfa W (jfr. riúfa tysvar seyðinn U). 6 söpinn skr. R. 11 því] honum (+því T) fylli sinni af uxanum (ox- T) WT. 12 it fyrsta] í fyrstu WT. bógana RT, bóguna U, böguna W. 15 kropp] bak WTU. 17 griót WT.

epli sín; en Loki vil þat. verður hann þá lauss ok ferr til lagsmanna sinna, ok er eigi at sinni sǫgð fleiri tíðindi um þeira ferð áðr þeir koma heim.

En at ákveðinni stundu teygir Loki Iðunni út um Ásgarð í  
25 skóg nokkvorn ok segir at hann hefir fundit epli þau er henne munu gripir í þikkia, ok bað at hon skal hafa með sér sín epli ok bera saman ok hin. Þá kemr þar Þiazi iqtunn í arnarham ok tektr Iðunni ok flýgr braut með ok í Þrymheim til bús síns.

En æsir urðu illa við hvarf Iðunnar ok gerduz þeir brátt hárir  
30 ok gamlir. Þá áttu þeir æsir þing ok [spyrir hverr annan] hvat síðarst vissi til Iðunnar. En þat var sét síðarst at hon gekk [út] ór Ásgarði með Loka. Þá var Loki tekinn ok færðr á þingit, ok var honom heitit bana eða píslum. En er hann varð hræddr, þá kvaz hann myndu sök(i)a eptir Iðunni í Iqtunheima ef Freyia  
35 vill liá honum valshams er hon á. Ok er hann fær valshaminn, flýgr hann norðr í Iqtunheima ok kemr einn dag til Þiaza iqtuns: var hann róinn á sæ, en Iðunn var ein heima. Brá Loki henni í hnotar líki ok hafði í klóm sér ok flýgr sem mest. En er Þiazi kom heim ok saknar Iðunnar, tektr hann arnarhaminn ok flýgr  
40 eptir Loka ok dró arnsúg í flugnum. En er æsirnir sá er valrinn flaug með hnotina ok hvar ǫrninn flaug, þá gengu þeir út undir Ásgarð ok báru þannig byrðar af lokarspánum, ok þá er valrinn flaug inn of borgina, lét hann fallaz niðr við borgarvegginn; þá slógu æsirnir eldi í lokarspánu(na), en ǫrninn mátti eigi stöðva  
45 (sik) er hann misti valsins: laust þá eldinum í fiðri arnarins, ok tók þá af fluginn. Þá vóro æsirnir nær ok drápu Þiaza iqtun firir innan Ásgrindr, ok er þat víg allfrægt.

En Skaði, dóttir Þiaza iqtuns, tók hiálm ok bryniu ok ǫll her-  
vápn ok ferr til Ásgarðz at hefna fǫður síns. En æsir buðu henni  
50 sætt ok yfirbætr. ok hit fyrsta at hon skal kiósa sér mann af ásum ok kiósa at fótum ok síá ekki fleira af. Þá sá hon eins manns fœtr forkunnar fagra ok mælti: „Þenna kýs ek; fátt mun liótt á Baldri!“ En þat var Niqrðr ór Nóatúnum.

Þat hafði hon ok í sættargjörð sinni at æsir skyldo þat gera er

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24 stundu] stefnu WT. 28 Þrúðheim U. 30 spyrr] spurði W. hverr] +þeira T. 31 út synes á ha státt i R; ÷ WT. 32 þing WT. 38 í klóm WT, oklóm R. 40 fluginum W. En WT, er R. 44 -spánuna W, spánum T, -spánu R. 47 -grindr RWU, -garð T. 51 fótum WTU, favtum R (av=φ).

hon hugði at þeir skyldu eigi mega, at hlœ⟨g⟩ia hana. Þá gerði 55  
Loki þat at hann batt um skegg geitar nokkvorrar ok qðrum enda  
um hreðiar sér ok létu þau ýmsi eptir ok skrækti hvár⟨t⟩tveggia  
við hátt. Þá lét Loki fallaz í kné Skaða, ok þá hló hon. Var þá  
giqr sætt af ásanna hendi við hana.

Svá er sagt at Óðinn gerði þat til yfirbóta við hana at hann 60  
tók augu Þiaza ok kastaði upp á himin ok gerði af stiqrnur .ii.“

Þá mælti Ægir: „Mikill þykki mér Þiazi fyrir sér hafa verit.  
Eða hvers kyns var hann?“

Bragi svarar: „Olvaldi hét faðir hans, ok merki munu þér at  
þikkia ef ek segi þér frá honum. Hann var miqr gullauðigr, en er 65  
hann dó, ok synir hans skyldu skipta arfi, þá hqfðu þeir mæling  
at gullinu er þeir skiptu, at hverr skyldi taka munnfylli sína ok  
allir iafnmargar. Einn þeira var Þiazi, .ii. Iði, .iii. Gangr. En þat  
hqfum vær orðtak nú með oss at kalla gullit munntal þessa iqtna,  
en vér felum í rúnum eða í skáldskap svá, at vér kqlllum þat 70  
mál eða orð eða tal þessa iqtna.“

Þá mælti Ægir: „Þat þikki mér vera vel fqlgit í rúnum.“

A survey of the motifs found in *Haustlqng*<sup>1</sup> in Snorri and Saxo shows that two entirely different tales have been woven together, namely:

- I. The myth of Þjazi and Iðunn with the apples of youth; and
- II. The narrative of the marriage with the giant's daughter and choice of husband merely by looking at his legs.

### I. The Myth of Þjazi and Iðunn with the Apples of Youth

The following groups of motifs can be distinguished in the various traditions of Þjazi:

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58 við] ÷ WTU. Skaða RTU, Skaði W. 60 hana] Skaða WTU. 64 Auðvaldi U. 67 at (1)] á WT. 70 felum WT, fellum R. 71 orð eða tal *Rasks konjektur*, orðta tal R, or⟨ð⟩tak T, orða tal W.

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<sup>1</sup> For a thorough linguistic analyses of the Icelandic text see KIIL, Tjodolvs *Haustlqng* in which the different expressions and their appearance in other context are discussed.

Survey of the Motifs

<i>Haustlǫng</i> 9th(?) century	<i>Snorri</i> 13th century
. . .	. . .
Food does not boil	=
The giant Þjazi in the guise of an eagle takes the food	=
Loki strikes at the eagle with a stick and gets stuck to the eagle	=
Loki is let loose, if he promises Þjazi Iðunn and her apples	=
	Loki coaxes Iðunn into coming to a forest with better apples
The gods age, they hold council and threaten to kill Loki if he does not fetch Iðunn back	=
Loki who often played nasty tricks on the Asa gods, flies in the guise of a hawk to Þjazi in order to fetch Iðunn	Loki travels in the guise of a falcon with Iðunn as a nut between his claws
Þjazi pursues them in the guise of an eagle	=
Þjazi is singed by the fire from the gods' woodshavings	=
	Óðinn throws out Þjazi's eyes, which become two heavenly stars
	By way of wergild Skaði may choose a husband merely by looking at his legs
	She chooses the most beautiful foot believing it is Baldr's, but it is Njörðr's
	Skaði must be coaxed to laugh
	Loki ties himself to the beard of a billy-goat. Skaði laughs at their capers
	Gylfaginning chap. 23: Njörðr's sea song Skaði's mountain song

in the Þjazi Myth.

<i>Saxo</i> 13th century	<i>The Tale of the Sons of Turen</i> 18th (15th, 12th centuries)
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. . .

The sons of Turen have killed Cian, Lugh's father. The wergild to Lugh consists of the execution of various tasks by the sons of Turen, among others: To fetch the apples of life

The sons of Turen fly in the guise of hawks to the garden of Hisbe to get the apples

They circle round and are shot at

When there are no arrows left they take the apples

They are pusued by the daughters of the giant — fire-vomiting griffins

The sons of Turen in hawk guise are scorched by the fire from the griffins and fall into the sea

They turn themselves into swans, reach the boat and save themselves bringing with them the apples

Hadding rescues Ragnhild from a giant  
R. nurses Hadding's wound, puts a ring in the wound

Chooses husband by feeling their legs.  
Finds the ring in the wound

Hadding sings of the sea. Ragnhild sings of the mountains



1. The slaying of the giant Þjazi as a heroic deed (Hárbarðsljóð 19, Hervarar saga, Saxo, Lokasenna 50).

Þjazi's eyes become heavenly stars (Hárbarðsljóð, Snorri).

2. Þjazi is burned as a result of chasing Loki in the guise of an eagle flying into the fire of the asagods (Haustlång, Snorri).

Þjazi has stolen Iðunn and the apples from the Asa gods with the aid of Loki. Loki is compelled to restore her to the Asa gods.

3. The giant's daughter marries the giant slayer (Hervarar saga, Saxo) or is given a spouse by way of wergild (Snorri) and may choose from many men a husband merely by looking at their legs (Saxo, Snorri).

4. The connection Þjazi — Skaði, father — daughter (Snorri, Grímnismál 11, Gylfaginning, Lokasenna 50).

5. Mountain and skiing divinities (Snorri, Gylfaginning, cf. Heimskringla, Schöning's edition, I. pp. 13—14).

6. Þrymheim, dwelling-place of Þjazi (Snorri, Gylfaginning, Grímnismál).

#### *Notes on the Motifs in Groups 1—2 and 4—6*

Group 1. The motifs in this group belong to the type of myth concerned with the slaying of the ancient giant, whose body is used to create the world. The Ymir myth lacks the motif of *the eyes that become heavenly bodies*, although one would be justified in expecting to find it there. Instead the motif appears in conjunction with the killing of the giant Þjazi. Together with the Ymir myth, this motif-complex should be referred to the type of myth of *the ancient giant from whose body the world is created*. This type belongs to the class of creation myths and appears in Central Asia and the Far East, sporadically also in America.<sup>2</sup>

Group 2. The motifs in this group seem to be related to the Irish tale of the sons of Turen, which in its turn is dependent on the classical myth of the apples of the Hesperides, as Bugge has shown.<sup>3</sup> The Irish tale of the sons of Turen with the fetching of the apples of life is reminiscent in its construction of the deeds

<sup>2</sup> DÄHNHARDT, *Natursagen* 1 p. 96. KÜHN, *Berichte über den Weltanfang bei den Indochinesen und ihren Nachbarvölkern*. ROTH, *The Creation Myths* p. 507.

<sup>3</sup> BUGGE, *Iduns Æbler*.

of Hercules, one of which is to fetch the apples of life. In the Irish tale there is, similarly, *a series of tasks* to be performed, a parallel to those imposed on Hercules. The motivation in this case is that Lugh, by way of *wergild* for his slain father Cian, demands treasures from the sons of Turen, treasures that require mighty deeds to acquire.

The tale of the sons of Turen agrees with regard to the order of motifs and details with the myth of Þjazi, for example the chasing in eagle guise; griffins chase hawks (the sons of Turen); fire, breathed out by the griffins, singes the hawks so that they fall into the sea; here they are changed into swans who save themselves by climbing aboard the boat containing the apples. As Bugge has pointed out, it would seem that the motif of the burned hawks has been transformed into the motif of Þjazi burned by the fire of the Asa gods.

#### *The Relationship with Classical or Celtic Tradition*

A connection with classical tradition seems to be irrefutable in the case of the apples of Iðunn. Bugge has indicated that this is not of a direct, but of an indirect, nature and has come via the Irish tale of the sons of Turen, which possesses striking parallels to the Þjazi myth. That the Irish tale is connected to the legend of Hercules and the apples of the Hesperides is suggested by the admittedly late text of the sons of Turen which mentions the "apples of Hisbe". In the phrase "the garden of Hisbe", Bugge tells us, we find the Celtic derivation from the Latin form "Hesperus" instead of "Hesperus". Our knowledge of the importance Oriental, Greek and Latin literature has had for the Celtic folklore,<sup>4</sup> gives us reason to believe that it is both possible and likely that the sons of Turen is descended from a classical *literary* prototype. The tale of the sons of Turen is of a mediaeval type although the manuscript in which it is told dates from the eighteenth century. The wergild imposed on the three sons of Turen is also referred to in the Book of Lecan in approximately 1416. In the Book of Leinster, which was written about 1160, only the

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<sup>4</sup> See CARNEY, *Studies in Irish Literature and History*. BP 4 p. 144.

chief and the three brothers slain by the sons of Turen are mentioned. Although nothing is known of the construction of the tale of the sons of Turen before the eighteenth century the references to this tale in the Book of Lecan and the Book of Leinster show, however, that the tradition can be traced back to the twelfth century.

Perhaps it may seem frivolous to associate eighteenth century material with these references in the Lecan Book and the Leinster Book. But, the knowledge of the faithful rendering in which whole tales and their motifs have been preserved for a thousand years,<sup>5</sup> as can be proved in a number of cases in Ireland, makes it not merely possible but even likely that the eighteenth century text reflects rather faithfully the construction of the tale in the twelfth century. If it provided the foundation for *Haustlong*, it follows that it must have been formed earlier than the date of *Haustlong* which is usually considered to be the ninth or tenth century. The absence of early texts constitutes a problem also in the case of the *Útgarðr* myth, which is assigned by von Sydow, Christiansen and others, to the Celtic tradition although this myth cannot be substantiated in early texts but is well known in later tradition.

The author of *Haustlong* mentions a couple of kennings which indicate that he must have been thoroughly familiar with British and/or European mediaeval tales, namely:

1. Loki as the thief of the *Brísingamen*.
2. Loki as the father of the (Fenris-)úlfr.
3. The fettered Loki.

The first kenning suggests familiarity with the *Brosinga mene* and the tale of Eormenric in *Beowulf* (see p. 53), the second kenning implies knowledge of the work of Isidore of Seville on the genesis of the Monsters (see p. 166). The third suggests familiarity with the myth of the fettered Loki. The author of *Haustlong* thus possessed a wide acquaintance with mediaeval European literature and the possibility that he was also versed in tales

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<sup>5</sup> For the professional storytellers' mnemonic technique and unbelievable artistic skill see DRAAK, Duncan Macdonald of South Uist p. 47. DELARGY, *The Gaelic Story-teller* p. 177.

from classical times cannot be excluded. Even de Vries has asserted that a connection with classical tradition cannot be excluded in the case of *Haustlong*, whose author may have been in contact with classical literature as early as the ninth century. de Vries is not thinking in terms of an indirect contact via the Celtic cultural area, nor does he discuss Bugge's work.

In addition to the views expressed earlier on the affinity of the motifs found in the Þjazi myth and the Irish version of the classical tale, it seems to me that the period under review, i.e. the ninth or tenth century to which *Haustlong* is usually dated, speaks in favour of contact with Celtic culture. At this very time the Celtic — one ought rather to say British, considering the cultural regions then existing in the British Isles<sup>6</sup> — was in all probability the intermediary link in the dissemination of classical as well as Christian literary tradition (see pp. 223, 226). The argument put forward above may suffice to show that the author of *Haustlong* was thoroughly acquainted with the mediaeval literary tradition and that his work has its origin in the classical myth of the apples of the Hesperides — probably through an intermediary British source such as the tale of the Sons of Turen.

### *The Þjazi and the Suttung Myths*

Both Ström and de Vries have drawn attention to a close affinity between the Suttung myth and the Þjazi myth. Suttung chases Óðinn — both fly in eagle guise. In the Þjazi myth rendered by Snorri the eagle (Þjazi) pursues Loki in the guise of a falcon i.e. Freyas valshamr. In Ásgarðr the Asa gods are ready, as soon as Loki has come inside the walls of Ásgarðr, to set fire to the pyre<sup>7</sup> in which Þjatzi is consumed, just as they are prepared with buckets when Óðinn, in the guise of an eagle, spews forth the stolen mead. The Suttung myth is, however, a variant of the

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<sup>6</sup> The Celtic scholars CARNEY and DRAAK have asserted that "Celtic" can easily lead to misunderstanding if interpreted as denoting racial-biological characteristics. See CHRISTIANSEN, *Til Spørmålet om forholdet mellem irsk og nordisk tradisjon* p. 1.

<sup>7</sup> In *Haustlong* it is not a pyre of wood shavings but of flaming arrows directed against the Þjazi eagle according to KIIL, *Tjodolvs Haustlong* p. 78 ff.

myth of *the bird who fetches sweet water* (mead or soma) for the Asa gods or for men. It is a primitive *aetiological myth* belonging to quite another category than the *entertainment myth* of Iðunn's apples, the material for which has come from popular tales. Thus, for example, Agni in eagle guise fetches the soma drink and the trickster raven on the west coast of North America fetches sweet water<sup>8</sup> for men. It is to this type that the Suttung myth belongs. In a number of fire-robbery myths from North-Western American Indian territory the raven fetches fire for the use of men. When he attains his goal his beak has been almost totally burned away. Sometimes the raven is caught fast in the smoke hole while flying away with the stolen firebrand. This often jesting<sup>9</sup> presentation of the tribulations undergone by the trickster in his efforts to arrange the world for men and make it habitable for them is highly reminiscent of Loki's life and his arrangements for the Asa gods in Old Norse mythology. The various *robbery myths* together form a cycle of myth types which gives the impression of holding a particular concept of the creation of the world, namely, that the world is created or put in order by the trickster with his *wiles and cunning obtaining* for men the essential things: Sweet water (mead), fire, the sun.

If one wishes to stress the similarities in the *situations* in the myths of Suttung and Þjazi, we have: the *Asa gods standing ready* in Ásgarðr with buckets — or a pyre. It has been suggested that the tale of the apples of Iðunn has lent this characteristic to the Suttung myth. The opposite seems more reasonable since the Suttung myth is a variant of the myth of the fetching of water or soma where the motif is a propiate one.

de Vries and Ström have not taken Bugge's combination into consideration and see a different meaning in the fire which consumes Þjazi (just as it burns the sons of Turen in the guise of hawks). Ström adopts Anne Holtsmark's view of the Iðunn-Þjazi myth as a ritual seasonal drama.

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<sup>8</sup> Compare BLOOMFIELD, *The Myth of Soma and the Eagle*. ROTH, *The Creation Myths* p. 505.

<sup>9</sup> Significantly enough, JUNG, KERÉNYI and RADIN entitle their work on the trickster "Der Göttliche Schelm".

Richtig möchte es jedoch sein, dass betreffs gewisser Punkte rituelle Tatsachen ihren Niederschlag in der Mythe gefunden haben. Das gilt vor allem von dem Feuer, das die Asen anzünden und in dem der Adler seine Flügel versengt. Es sind die Frühlingsfeuer, die gegen alle bösen Wesen gezündet werden, sie flammen über ganz Europa noch heutzutage, zu Ostern, zu Pfingsten, am ersten Mai oder Johanni . . . So fliehen Loki und Idunn durch das Frühlingsfeuer: sie werden in den Asgard gerettet, aber der Riese Þjazi wird gesengt und fällt zu Boden.<sup>10</sup>

That they flew *through* the fire is related neither by Snorri nor the author of *Haustlong*. It is true, of course, that fires burn even to-day in all parts of Europe on the occasion of spring and summer festivals. It is far from established that this popular custom is to be interpreted as a ritual seasonal drama and even if this were the case there would be no reason to associate it with the fire of the Asa gods in the Þjazi myth. *The function of the fire* is to *render the giant harmless* — the bird in the tale — just as in historical contexts the witch-pyres was kindled to reduce the offender to harmless ashes, not to represent a ritual seasonal drama. There is no reason to interpret the fire as a magical-ritual fire in contexts in which its destructive force is employed as *the means of punishment or death*, nor in cases where it is employed for warlike purposes (vide Saxo's "war reports" with numerous instances of pyrotechnics — all without thought of magic!).

Nor, for that matter, does there seem to be any good reason to regard Þjazi as a winter- and/or death demon, an explanation which strikes me as far-fetched (p. 87). According to Ström and Holtsmark Þjazi is not only a representative of the destructive powers of existence but is also identical with Hraesvelgr (*Vafþrúðnismál* 37). There is, however, no statement in *Vafþrúðnismál* that permits an identification with Þjazi rather than anyone else. The wind eagle can just as well be identified with one of the other giants — or with Óðinn himself in the guise of an eagle.

Þjazi is also held to be the father of the *winter goddess* Mjǫrn-Skaði, illustrating Þjazi's connection with the powers of winter. Why not call Skaði a goddess of skiing, hunting and the forest?

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<sup>10</sup> STRÖM, Loki p. 87.

Njorðr, her husband and counterpart, is not claimed as a summer god but rather as the god of *the coast* and *fishing*. It seems to me that it has not been primarily the *seasonal* contrasts but the contrasts implicit in various *occupations* and methods of making a living on the coast and in the mountains that have been the main concern, even if these are indirectly dependent on the seasons. The myth could equally easily be an explicatory myth for various occupations or seasonal employments, if it is absolutely necessary to interpret it in a certain fashion.

The theory has been expressed that the motif of Njorðr's and Skaði's different dwelling places, at sea or in the mountains as the case may be, is descended from Apuleius' tale of Amor and Psyche, who live apart though married. In Apuleius' tale the motif is of an entirely different character. Venus plays the part of the cruel mother-in-law who refuses to allow Psyche to meet her husband Amor, whom she keeps under lock and key; Venus sends her daughter-in-law Psyche out on various dangerous missions. This is a variant of Aa 425, the search for the lost husband, and is not related to the motif of the separate dwelling places of man and wife.

#### *Mythological References to Þjazi-Skaði*

Groups 4—6 in the Þjazi myth (cf. p. 18) contain some mythological notices or references different in style from the epic tales of groups 1—2. Although these references may be of certain significance seen from a religious-historical point of view, they have to be omitted here, as they do not throw any light on the Loki figure.

## **II. The Narrative of the Marriage with the Giant's Daughter and Choice of Husband merely by Looking at his Legs**

### *Notes on group 3*

The motifs in this group are concerned partly with the giant's daughter (or a girl held captive by the giant) who marries her rescuer, partly with the choice of husband merely by looking at

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Amor and Psyche (APULEIUS, *Metam.* 5, 28).

his legs. In Snorri and Saxo the wergild consists of letting the giant's daughter herself choose a husband among the Asa gods merely by looking at their legs. In Saxo this story is attributed to Hadding and Ragnhild. Ragnhild (Skaði) is not a giant's daughter but the captive of a giant (Þjazi) who is slain by the noble Hadding. Ragnhild who has nursed Hadding has hidden a ring in the wound in his leg (sic!) and when she is allowed to choose a husband for herself, like Skaði, merely by looking at the men's legs she knows whom to choose. Skaði, however, chooses the man with the most beautiful legs, hoping that they will belong to the beautiful Baldr — but, alas, the legs were Njörðr's. Ragnhild, on the other hand, feels the men's legs and can thus distinguish Hadding from the others by his scar. This whole episode with the choice of husband by looking at his legs is founded, as Krohn has pointed out,<sup>12</sup> on well-known folk tale motifs which have here received a special form. It is, above all, in the tales of the Dragon slayer (Aa 300, Aa 314) and the Princess on the Glass Mountain (Aa 530) who, in her role of heroine, ties a handkerchief round the wounded leg of the hero, for example, or ties a ring in his hair; with the aid of this recognition device she discovers her rescuer again. In Saxo these folk tale motifs have been fused with the motif, found in the myth of Skaði, of choosing a husband merely by looking at his legs which probably refers to a special play or game.<sup>13</sup> Here is the explanation of the extraordinary motif of *the ring in the wound*. That Saxo's myth is identical with that of Þjazi-Skaði is further shown by Ragnhild's paeon of praise to the forest and mountain world while Hadding pays honour to the sea, just as in Snorri it is Skaði who praises the mountain and Njörðr the sea.

The motif of *choosing a husband with reference to his legs* indicates that both Saxo's and Snorri's traditions are partly derived from a popular tale of a hero who frees the maiden held captive by the giant and who later chooses her husband with the help of a recognition device: the wound in the leg. If the girl is

<sup>12</sup> KROHN, *Skandinavisk mytologi* p. 180. Cf. also DE VRIES, *Handskrivna anteckningar till Saxokommentaren*. (Mss comments to Saxo) LUF A 479: 11 a ff.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. also ROTH, *The Cinderella Cycle* p. 107.



a captive of the giant the hero by slaying him is the rescuer. If the girl is made the daughter of the giant, the hero is to her not a rescuer but the killer of her father, hence the wergild. The tale has two different situations which demand for different development of the events, when it presents the heroine either as the captive or the daughter of the giant. Once incorporated into the myth, the order of events found in the story is broken in deference to the notions of the prevailing mythology and the mythologist's intentions.

Snorri's variant has joined together not only motifs from Group 3 with the Þjazi myth but also numerous other motif-complexes from various types of tales. The introduction to the Þjazi myth: Loki is entangled with the eagle when he wants to strike it with his stick and is forced to run after it is reminiscent of the motif in the story of the Golden Goose or the Boy who Made the Princess Laugh. In the story of the Golden Goose (Aa 571) all who touch the goose get stuck and when the princess sees the long line of people running after the goose she is moved to laughter — and the boy who owns the goose has won the princess. In Snorri *Loki coaxes Skaði to laugh* by tying his phallus to the beard of a billy-goat.<sup>14</sup> This recalls similar burlesque scenes in the later Scandinavian folktale the object of which is to make the princess laugh.<sup>15</sup> The motif of Bubo in the Persephone myth, which has been compared with Loki's burlesque behaviour, makes its appearance in quite a different context and that is why the two should not, in my opinion, be associated.

### Summary

As much importance have been given to Loki because of his appearance together with Skaði and Þjazi who have been considered as representations of winter and cold and dark forces I

<sup>14</sup> v. D. LEYEN, *Das Märchen in den Göttersagen der Edda* p. 32 ff. BP 2 p. 40 note 1; p. 41 note 2. Cf. also KAUFMAN, *Zur Thrymsquidha* p. 108.

<sup>15</sup> GRUNDTVIG's manuscript collection of tales No. 20 a. Cf. also GRUNDTVIG 22 a, d, which has some resemblance to HANS ANDERSEN's Tom Fool (*Dummerjöns* p. 562 ff.) who rides a billy-goat and by his foolish answers succeeds in making the princess nonplussed, i.e., Type Aa 559. Cf. also CHRISTIANSEN, *Norske Eventyr* Aa 571.

have tried to show the different components of which the Þjazi myth consists. Of all the myths in which Loki appears none except the Baldr myth is composed of so many heterogenous parts as the Þjazi myth.

In Snorri's version the Þjazi myth is composed of:

1. An origin myth of the killing of a giant and the throwing of his eyes up to heaven where they become heavenly stars. (Cf. the Ymir myth where the world is created from dead giants body. Cf. also the star named after Aurvandill's toe which Þórr threw up to heaven.
2. The story of the Hesperian Apples in a form similar to that one preserved in the Irish tale of the Sons of Turen.
3. The motif of the folktale in which the princess chooses the husband by means of recognition from the wound in his legs which she has treated.
4. The folktale of Making the Princess Laugh.

It should also be noted that *Haustlong* which tells the story of the Hesperian apples also mentions in kennings: Loki as the *Thief of Brísingamen*; as the *Father of the Fenrisúlfr*; and the *Fettered Loki*. These three kennings indicate that the author of *Haustlong* was directly or indirectly familiar with the mediaeval European tradition of the Eormenric tale, the works of Isidore of Seville and the Classical — Christian concept of the fettered demon.

These kennings give us a first warning against regarding the Old Norse material as showing a pure and heathen picture of Loki, as the author must have been a learned man familiar with the scholastical tradition and mediaeval novelles. In the Þjazi myth popular tales have been modified to suit mythological representations and in consequence they do not contain any authentic Loki traits.

Since the entire myth in those elements where Loki plays a part is constructed of motifs taken partly from folk tales partly from humorous tales of an international or traditional character, it follows that no traits which are constitutive for the Loki figure can be extracted from this material.

## 2. REGINSMÁL AND THE ANDVARI MYTH

### Text

The Andvari Myth from Snorra Edda ed. Anne Holtsmark and Jón Helgason pp. 92—94:

. . . „*Hver* er sök til þess at gull er kallat otrgiöld?“

„Svá er sagt at þá er æsir fóru at kanna heim allan, Óðinn ok Loki ok Hœnir, þeir kómu at á nokkvorri ok gengu með ánni til fors nokkvors, ok við forsinn var otr einn ok hafði tekit lax  
5 ór forsinum ok át bundanndi. Þá tók Loki upp stein ok kastaði at otrinum ok laust í hofut honum. Þá hrósaði Loki veiði sinni at hann hefði veitt í einu hoggvi otr ok lax. Tóku þeir þá laxinn ok otrinn ok báru með sér, kómu þá at bæ nokkvorum ok gengu inn. En sá búandi er nefndr Hreiðmarr er þar bió; hann var  
10 mikill firir sér ok miök fiqlkunnigr. Beidduz æsir at hafa þar náttstað ok kvóðuz hafa með sér vist ærna, ok sýndu búandanum veiði sína. En er Hreiðmarr sá otrinn, þá kallaði hann sonu sína, Fáfnir ok Regin, ok segir at Otr bróðir þeira var drepinn ok svá hverir þat hofðu gert. Nú ganga þeir feðgar at ásunum ok taka  
15 þá hǫndum ok binda ok segja þá um otrinn at hann var sonr Hreiðmars. Æsir bióða firir sik fiqlaustn, svá mikit fé sem Hreiðmarr siálfr vill á kveða, ok varð þat at sætt með þeim ok bundit swardogum. Þá var otrinn fleginn; tók Hreiðmarr otrbelginn ok mælti við þá at þeir skulo fylla belginn af rauðu gulli ok svá hylia  
20 hann allan. Ok svá skal þat vera at sætt þeira. Þá sendi Óðinn Loka í Svartálfaheim, ok kom hann til dvergs þess er hét

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1 ff. *Dette kapitel mgl. W. ÷ Hver T, Sú R. 2 allan] ÷ TU. 7 með] eptir TU. 14 ganga TU, gangi R. 20 svá] ÷ TU.*

Andvari, hann var fiskr í vatni, ok tók Loki hann hǫndum ok lagði à hann fiǫrlausn alt gull þat er hann átti í steini sínum. Ok er þeir koma í steininn. þá bar dvergrinn fram allt gull þat er hann átti, ok var þat allmikit fé. Þá svipti dvergrinn undir 25 hǫnd sér einum litlum gullbaug; þa⟨t⟩ sá Loki ok bað hann fram láta bauginn. Dvergrinn bað hann taka eigi bauginn af sér ok létz mega ǫxla sér fé af bauginum ef hann heldi. Loki kvað hann eigi skyldu hafa einn penning eptir ok tók bauginn af honum ok gekk út. En dvergrinn mælti at sá baugr skyldi vera hverium 30 hǫfuðsbani er átti. Loki segir at honum þótti þat vel ok sagði at þat skyldi haldaz mega firir því, sá formáli, at hann skyldi flytia þeim til eyrna er þá tœki við.

Fór hann í braut ⟨ok kom⟩ til Hreiðmars ok sýndi Óðni gullit. En er hann sá bauginn, þá sýndiz honum fagr ok tók hann af 35 fénu en greiddi Hreiðmari gullit. Þá fylði hann otrbelginn sem mest mátti hann ok setti upp er fullr var. Gekk þá Óðinn til ok skyldi hylia belginn með gullinu, ok þá mælti hann við Hreiðmar at hann skal síá hvárt belgrinn er þá allr hulðr. En Hreiðmarr leit til ok hugði at vandliga ok sá eitt granahár ok bað þat hylia, 40 en at ǫðrum koste væri lokit sætt þeira. Þá dró Óðinn fram bauginn ok hulði granahárit ok sagði at þá vóro þeir lausir frá otrgiǫldunum. En er Óðinn hafði tekit geir sinn en Loki skúa sína ok þurptu þá ekki at óttaz, þá mælti Loki at þat skyldi haldaz er Andvari hafði mælt, at sá baugr ok þat gull skyldi 45 verða þess bani er átti. Ok þat helltz síðan. Nú er þat sagt ⟨af⟩ hveriu gull er otrgiǫld kallat eða nauðgiald ásanna eða róg-málmr . . .“

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22 Andvari *T* (*likesom Reg.*), Andþvari *R*, Andvarri *U*. 27 sér] +taka (!) *R*. 31 átti (*eller ætti* ?) *R*, ætti *TU*. 32 at (1) — formáli] því halldaz mega þann formála *U*. 40 til — at] á *TU*. 46 átti] ætti *TU*. helltz] +þat (!) *R*. — þat] ÷ *TU*. af hveriu *T*, hveriu *R*, hvi *U*.

## Survey of Motifs in the

Reginismál:	Snorri: Andvari myth
Óðinn Hænir Loki.	=
Stroll together, see an otter(dwarf) who sits, eyes closed, eating fish.	=
Loki kills it with a stone. Asa gods delighted with fur.	=
They spend the night with the otter's brothers and show them the fur.	=
The gods are required to pay sufficient wergild to fill and to cover the whole of the fur.	=
Loki borrows a fishing net from Rán to catch a rich pike (the dwarf Andvari) in Andvaraforss.	Loki is sent to the elves of darkness to seize the dwarf Andvari in the guise of a fish.
The captured pike gives all his gold in exchange for his life; he is deprived of his very last ring and he places a curse on the gold.	=
The Asa gods fill the fur with gold, raise and cover it with gold.	=
One whisker is still uncovered. The dwarfs are not satisfied until the whisker has been covered with the aid of the ring.	=

**Reginismál and the Andvari Myth**

Saxo: Hadding's saga

Fredegar: Historia Francorum

Hadding bathes, is attacked by a monster.<sup>1</sup> Kills and takes it to his camp. Hadding, boasting of his exploit, meets a woman who says, "Woe to you, Hadding, for your ill-deed. The vengeance of the gods will strike you sorely . . . You slew a god in the shape of an animal — now all gnomes will turn against you . . ." All the prophesied disasters overtake Hadding and to atone for his crime he and all his descendants offer an annual sacrifice. The Swedes call it *Fröblot*.

Theodoric, King of the Ostrogoths, is to mediate between the Franks and the Visigoths. He decided that the Visigoths should pay the Franks enough gold to cover a knight seated on horse-back with a lance in his hand (*Sedens super equum, contum erectum tenens in manum*).

The Franks are not satisfied until the point of the lance has been covered with gold.

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<sup>1</sup> SAXO p. 29 . . inauditi generis beluam crebris ictibus attentatam oppressit . . .

### Notes on the Regismál and the Andvari Myth

The manner in which the Andvari myth and the legend of the Nibelungs have been interwoven has been a subject of discussion.<sup>1</sup> Gudmund Schütte has chosen to place Regismál and the Fredegar tale in direct — de Vries in indirect — dependence on each other.<sup>2</sup> It is possibly true, as de Vries asserts, that the paying of the wergild is not based upon legal practice<sup>3</sup> in Scandinavia but constitutes a *literary motif* which was introduced into Scandinavia and subsequently linked with the tale of Siegfried. The narrative as given by Saxo suggests that the Andvari myth is quite independent of the Siegfried tale. For in Saxo we find as an independent narrative: The slaying of the god (dwarf) in the guise of a water beast, the joy over the fine catch that Hadding takes back with him to this camp, the fury of the gnomes incurred by Hadding, the prophecy of future disasters and finally the penance in the form of an ordained sacrifice to Freyr. This narrative seems to be a variant of Snorri's episode concerning the slaying of the otter-dwarf; and this appears to be the core on which has been

<sup>1</sup> DE VRIES, *The Problem of Loki* p. 42.

<sup>2</sup> SCHÜTTE, *Nibelungensagnet* p. 248 ff. Cf. BRATE, *Sámunds Edda* p. 343.

<sup>3</sup> In both the Eddas the otter skin must first be filled and then covered with gold. The expression "fylla ok hylia" corresponds to the German "Hülle und Fülle". As DE VRIES has shown, this saying is derived from a number of legal practices quoted by GRIMM in *Deutsche Rechtsalterthümer* p. 668 ff. According to the legal practices cited from Germany, the fines for the killing of a dog were to be paid in this manner, namely, that the dog was suspended and covered with red wheat or covered in such a way that only a quarter of its tail was visible. According to English practice, whoever killed a swan would be fined in this way, namely, the swan was suspended from its beak, grains of corn being heaped upon it. Among the Arabs the dead dog was suspended by its tail so that its nose touched the ground and corn was heaped upon it until its tail was covered. According to the Scandinavian tradition, the fine for a stolen ox was levied by ordering the skin to be filled with flour. It is against the background of such legal codes that we are enabled to see the development in the tale of the *motif* of covering the otter or the knight with gold. Even in the Hadding Saga there is a parallel to this motif, which also has its counterpart in ancient legal codes, namely, Handvan who in ransom for his life pays his weight in gold. Post or propter we have the saying worth his weight in gold. — In Regismál the dwarf in the shape of a pike pays for his life with all his gold. Cf. also KERMODE, *Manx Crosses* p. 178.

laid both the payment of the wergild — the Fredegar type — and the etymological explanation of Andvaranautr and the tale of Siegfried, with which it is undoubtedly connected. In this conglomerate of motifs from different sources little remains that could be an authentic Loki trait unless it be the *borrowing of Rán's net and the capture of the pike*.

The myth of the wergild for the otter's death has obviously been well known, to judge from kennings such as Otrs Nauðgjöld and Tregum Otrs gjöldung.<sup>4</sup> We do not know whether the divine triad Óðinn, Hœnir, Loki appeared in these myths. de Vries believes, however, that Óðinn as god of war and Loki as a cunning person and adviser fit into this myth, which in his opinion was created for the Niebelungenlied. But what is Hœnir doing here? Well, de Vries believes that the author had read a tale in which *this triad* appears and, in that case, the tale must have been the Þjazi myth. For, according to de Vries, it is much too improbable that *two* myths should use Óðinn as a minor character, Loki as a major character and Hœnir merely as a name. This triad is, therefore, in de Vries' view borrowed from the Þjazi myth and cannot thus possess any counterpart in mythical concepts. That this should be a question of a traditional divine triad seems to me to be the only possible explanation. The triad Óðinn, Loki, Hœnir also occurs in the Faeroese *Lokka Táttur*, which is admittedly a late composition, based on a folktale type Aa 329 (Hiding from the Devil).<sup>5</sup> de Vries believes that the Faeroese narrative borrowed its triad from Reginsmál, which in its turn had received it from the Þjazi myth. In another context de Vries says that we must remember that we are familiar with only a small part of the once-extant Old Norse myth material. With this statement in mind, it seems to me more logical to regard the various report of the divine triad as *a traditional introduction* more or less in the manner of "When Our Lord and Saint Peter were walking . . ." To interpret the triad as a borrowing from the Þjazi myth > Reginsmál > Lokka Táttur seems to me improbable, since these

<sup>4</sup> DE VRIES, The Problem of Loki p. 44 gives a list of relevant kennings.

<sup>5</sup> HAMMERSHAIMB, Færøiske Kvæder p. 140 ff. (LYNGBYE, Færøiske Qvæder p. 500 ff.) Cf. BP 3 p. 365 ff. DE VRIES op. cit. p. 49 ff. GRAS, De Noordse Loki-Mythen p. 25.



myths have not otherwise influenced one another or borrowed motifs from one another. On the other hand, de Vries is undeniably right in supposing that one cannot discover any authentic traits for Óðinn, Loki or Hœnir in Lokka Táttur, since this is a variant of a traditional type of tale with traditional motifs.

Nor is it certain that the divine triad originally formed part of the Reginsmál. Various parts of Reginsmál and the Andvari myth are to be found with different persons in the principal roles, as we see in Saxo and in the *Historia Francorum*. *The curse of the gold* <sup>6</sup> occurs for example in the tale of Siegfried or the *Niebelungenlied* and the slaying of a *waterdemon*, the curse and the wergild all appear in Saxo's Hadding Saga. The covering of the spear point (corresponding to the covering of the otter's whisker) occurs in Fredegar's *Historia Francorum*. These parts thus appear independently of the divine triad Óðinn, Hœnir, Loki and we cannot therefore assume that any of these gods were originally connected with Reginsmál.

One part of Reginsmál has, however, no counterpart in other myths, namely, Loki's borrowing of Rán's net and the capture of the pike. In Snorri we learn that Loki catches the pike, but nothing is said of Rán's net. One can therefore postulate that if any part of Reginsmál shows traits authentic for Loki, it must be just that part which does not occur in Saxo and Fredegar.

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<sup>6</sup> Cf. the corresponding motif in *Sörlaþáttur* p. 50.

### 3. THE ÁSGARÐR MYTH

A man offers to build Ásgarðr for the gods in three winters, if he can have Freyja, the sun and the moon in return. The Asa gods consulted each other, and demanded that he should complete the construction in one winter and with no man to help him. Thereupon the man asked if he could have his horse Svaðilfæri to help him. The Asa gods consented, on the advice of Loki. The man started his work on the first day of winter, and when there were only three days left of winter the gods grew alarmed at the thought that he might be able to accomplish his task, as the horse worked so mightily. They forced Loki to put everything right again. Loki turned himself into a mare, who lured the stallion away with her neighing. The man did not succeed in catching his horse during that whole night. When the man was seized by a violent rage, the Asa gods saw that he was a giant and called Þórr to come home and kill him with his hammer. Some time later Loki gave birth to the horse Sleipnir.

This is a short summary of Snorri's tale. The myth of the building of Ásgarðr belongs to a special type of legend which has the following basic characteristic: A supernatural being promises a man to construct a building for him in exchange for the man himself, his unborn child or a similar reward. Should he not have completed the construction within the time agreed on, he will not receive his reward.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> In his work on Loki DE VRIES has given an excellent account of the relationship between the Masterbuilder legend and the Ásgarðr myth. The legend of the Masterbuilder has been subject to much thorough research: v. SYDOW, *Studier i Finnsägner och besläktade byggmästaresägner*. FOSSE-

The most important thing about this type of tale — as regards the plot — is that the work must be interrupted in its final phase. *It is a matter of almost completing the construction* and then interrupting the work so that the promise to the supernatural being is nullified. Where there is a question of a *time limit*, the work must be interrupted immediately before the end of it. Should the work be interrupted when it is just begun or only half ready, the point of the story would be lost. The building has to be completed except for the very last stones, and the man — in this case the Asa gods — must get out of his promise but keep the building. A device to interrupt the building of the house at the right moment is, for example, that the man's wife crows like a cock and makes all the cocks in the village reply, or wakes the cock too early. Or the builder is disturbed by a shout and gets confused in his work just as the sun rises, or else he is taken by surprise by the sunrise just as he is finishing the building or the horse comes with his last load of stones. In some variants of the builder legend it is a horse or an ox that appears as a beast of burden — especially in Ireland, but also in Iceland, Norway and Germany. It is evidently a variant of this type of legend with a horse as a beast of burden on which the myth of the building of Ásgarðr is based.

The device that seems to be unique in the Ásgarðr myth is that *the horse is lured away* from the building site and thus prevents the work from being completed in time. It is not certain whether parallels to this motif have existed also in the legend and not only in the myth. In the myth this humorous motif has been arranged in a skilful way, and explains, post or propter, why Loki gave birth to the horse Sleipnir.

There exists another type of builder legend which has been more popular and has the following basic characteristics: A super-

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NIUS, Sägnerna om trollen Finn och Skalle som byggmästare. SAHLGREN. Sägnerna om trollen Finn och Skalle och deras kyrkobyggande. KROHN, Übersicht über einige Resultate der Märchenforschung. BOBERG, Baumeistersagen (reviewed by SVENSSON, Rtg 1956, 1 p. 30 ff.). v. D. LEYEN, Märchen in den Göttersagen der Edda p. 22, and DE VRIES, The Problem of Loki p. 68 ff. have quoted interesting examples of builder legends. Cf. also the recent works of CHRISTIANSEN. The Migratory Legends nr. 7065 (7060). LIUNGMAN, Svenska Sägner. STRÖMBÄCK and others p. 161 ff. Sägnerna om den första kyrkplatsen. Finnsägner in Norden och Kontinenten.

natural being promises a saint (usually) to build a church on condition that he will be given the saint himself, his head and/or eyes or the sun or the moon. Should the saint guess the name of the creature he will be freed from his promise.

The promise of the sun and the moon to the builder, should he succeed, has been subject to detailed discussion (v. Sydow, Fossenius). Were it here a question of a misinterpreted Irish oath formula — “I give sun and moon” (i.e. I swear by the sun and the moon) — it would be a very attractive solution, if such a formula could be found in connection with this type of tale. So far this has not been the case. Therefore one more possibility must be considered, namely, that the myth, in analogy with other myths, has let the Asa gods promise to give away some of the treasures of Ásgarðr — which Loki sometimes does — it may be sun or moon, or Freyja, like in the fetching of the hammer, Iðunn and the apples or something similar.

The Masterbuilder legend has a much greater circulation than is evident from investigations conducted up till now. Thus, for instance, in Eastern Europe and Asia it is coupled with the creation myths. The creator-builder is forming one part of the country, but is interrupted in the middle of his work and has to leave it unfinished. Creation is imagined as a kind of building procedure and the builder is disturbed by a shout or the crowing of a cock — like the builder in some of the European variants —, as, for example, in these stories from the Far East:

To Lizaba is given the credit for the creation of the world. (Die ganze Welt ist der ihnen bekannte Teil Assams und die darum liegenden Hügel!) But, even though he is called the earth-maker, yet by their tradition he did very little: he only levelled out the Assam valley. When he had smoothed out the present valley, and was ready to begin operations on the hills, a cockroach came and told him that war had broken out. Because the war demanded his immediate attention, he discontinued his work, never to take it up again; consequently we have the rugged hills where the Aos live.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> KÜHN, *Berichte über den Weltanfang bei den Indochinesen* p. 44 from Ao Naga (Assam).

. . . to him (=Lichaba) the creation of the world is attributed. He worked quietly and steadily at first, and had time to make the plains smooth and neat. But just as he began work on the area where the Naga Hills (are) now, a water-beetle called out: "Enemies are upon you." So he had to work in a desperate hurry and only had time to make a jumble of hills. . . .<sup>3</sup>

According to oral information supplied by Dr. H. Ikeda, Honolulu, working at present on a type-index of Japanese tales and legends, this Builder legend is very popular in Japan. It is often told of temples which are still unfinished; a log or a piece of timber is still missing. It is also told of giants who are competing in building high mountains.

Of the following stories, kindly translated by Dr. Ikeda, the first one was printed in List of Japanese Local Legends, Nippon Den-setsu Meii. Tokyo 1950, p. 423 ff. and recorded from Fuhushima prefecture:

1. A strange carpenter came and built "Temple of Laughter" over night. And before he finished — only one beam in the ceiling was missing — dawn came and he heard a laugh. So that is why the temple is called Temple of Laughter. The ceiling board will never be fixed by other carpenters. Who-soever tries — the nails come apart and the board cannot be fixed.

2. *Wait-a-Minute Temple*. A famous monk or Buddhist priest, Kobodaishi, had to build a temple overnight. Just before he finished it, the sun came out. Then he took hold of the beam beside him and threw it away saying: "Wait a minute!" That is how the temple acquired its name.

3. A goblin wanted to build overnight a mountain as high as Fuhushima. When he had only one bag more to add to make the mountain as high as Fuhushima, dawn came and he threw away the last bag of earth and from that came Mount Haruna and the place from which this bag of earth was taken became Lake Haruna.

4. Two giants competed in making mountains before cock-crow in the morning. The one who made Mt. Fuji finished his first and went to see the other, who was making Mt. Haruna. This giant was still working when cock-crow came. Then he threw away the basket of earth and that made a little mountain called Hitomokkoyama.

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<sup>3</sup> ib. p. 45.

Furthermore I have found this tradition, told about the building of a stone canoe, reported from Tahiti by Ropiteau and published in BSEO 1930 pp. 47—48.

It is also told in a corrupt form in the Island of Hawaii, where the legend is associated with the *menehunes* (the dwarfs) as the builders of old-time temples and ponds of which only ruins are left.

The Ásgarðr myth is a variant of this widely circulated Master-builder legend, with the West European motif of an ox or horse as beast of burden, as in Snorri's tale. In the motif of the *horse* as a beast of burden is found the incitement for this special guile: to let a *mare* lure the stallion away from work — and the humorous end of the affair entails for Loki that he gives birth to the horse Sleipnir. This special guile which explains how Loki came to give birth to Sleipnir has not been proved to exist in other variants of the legend.

In Hyndluljóð verse 40 we read that Loki gave birth to Sleipnir with Svaðilfæri as the father, and a late tale from the Faeroes states that Loki's worst experience was when as a mare he became pregnant by Grani.<sup>4</sup> Lokasenna verse 32 only mentions that Loki gave birth.

The question is now, whether these two references to Loki as a mare represent a trait that is authentic for Loki, or if these texts only refer to the incident in the Ásgarðr myth. The possibility that they refer to an authentic Loki trait cannot be excluded. However, the most likely explanation seems to be that both these passages refer to a variant of the humorous Ásgarðr myth such as it has been preserved in Snorri. The fact that Snorri does not make any comments on the Sleipnir episode in the chapter dealing with Loki's progeny seems to indicate that he did not consider it to be of mythological value.

### The Interpretation of Völuspá 25–26

de Vries is of the opinion that Völuspá 25—26 refer to the Ásgarðr myth. de Vries relates these verses to those myths in which the giants *demand* or *threaten* to take with them one of the

<sup>4</sup> LYNGBYE, Færøiske Qvæder om Sigurd Fofnersbane og hans Æt p. 21.

goddesses Freyja, Sif or Iðunn, and is of the opinion that they reflect a myth about the fertility goddesses who disappear during winter but are fetched back in the Spring by Þórr, who then breaks the power of the giants.<sup>5</sup> However, such myths are not found in the material. They are scholarly constructions composed after the Demeter myth.

If Völuspá verse 25: 5—8 should refer to a *capture* of Freyja, this must refer to a myth which has not been preserved, as the *captured* Freyja does not appear in the Ásgarðr myth. The actual point of the story is that the reward — the promise of the mortal (here Freyja), his child or eyes, or the sun and the moon — does *not* have to be paid and the hero is released from his promise. Therefore these lines can hardly refer to the Ásgarðr myth. Neither can “laevi blandit” mean that the sun and the moon have been stolen, as, indeed, de Vries has observed.

A more probable interpretation seems to be that supplied by v. d. Leyen (Märchen in den Göttersagen der Edda p. 39) and by Bugge. Bugge points out the connection between these lines and the Greek myth of Laomedon, who builds the walls of Troy aided by Poseidon and Apollo, but cheats them out of the reward for their work. Apollo is angered and sends pestilence as a punishment.<sup>6</sup> But neither is this solution quite satisfactory.

In Völuspá verses 1—26 are closely connected from the point of view of their contents, inasmuch as the verses represent a picture of the world — the Creation of the world in ancient times, its Destruction in the Future. If verses 25—26 in Völuspá are seen only in connection with the preceding verses 23—24, the only thing that one could possibly deduct from them is a reference to a battle between the Vanir and the Asa gods, oaths and agreements which are entered into and broken. It is then a general allusion to the ways and consequences of war. Seen in their context in the cosmologic poem in its entirety these verses could possibly be understood as an origin and explicatory myth of the first war in the world. But as these verses *precede the Baldr myth which is related to the tale of Thebes*, it seems more likely that the motif has been

<sup>5</sup> DE VRIES, *The Problem of Loki* p. 80.

<sup>6</sup> The tales concerning the foundation of Troy are otherwise richly varied. Cf. GRAVES, *The Greek Myths* 2 p. 259 ff.

taken from this tale, in which case the *pestilence* mentioned in this classical prototype (cf. below p. 152) — may correspond to “laevi blandit”.

But these questions fall outside the scope of this investigation. Here shall only be established that the Ásgarðr myth, being a variant of the wellknown Masterbuilder legend, is based on traditional motifs without any importance to the Loki figure. It is uncertain whether the motif of Loki as a foaling mare is an authentic mythical trait.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Very remotely the motif is reminiscent of Lugh's transformation into a calf in the Irish story about Lugh Scigmaig (ZCP 20 p. 197).



#### 4. SIF'S HAIR AND THE TREASURES OF THE ASA GODS

The story about Loki in *Skáldskaparmál*, as provider of the various treasures of the Asa Gods, forms a parallel to the other provider myths. The parallel extends to the introduction, in which Loki is portrayed as being in a dilemma, which as usual he falls undeservedly into. One agrees heartily with de Vries when he says that the myth is one of the more confusing in Old Norse mythology. The order of events is briefly as follows:

Loki had cut off all Sif's hair by way of a practical joke. Þórr forced Loki to go to the elves of darkness and make them forge for Sif hair of gold. Loki went then to the dwarfs, the sons of Ivald, who forged the hair of gold, *Skíðblaðnir*,<sup>1</sup> and the spear *Gungnir*. Loki wagered his head with the dwarf *Brokkr* that the latter's brother *Sindri* could not forge better treasures than these three. *Sindri* forged and *Brokkr* blow on the fire. They forged the boar (*Gullinborsti*), the ring (*Draupnir*) and Þórr's hammer. Loki, who was afraid of losing his head, transformed himself into a gadfly and stung *Brokkr* thrice, the last time above his eye so that blood flowed and *Brokkr* had to relinquish the bellows for a moment in order to wipe his eye. The result of the interrupted blowing was that Þórr's hammer was made with too short a handle.<sup>2</sup> Óðinn, Þórr and Freyja were to decide on the wager. Óðinn received *Gungnir*, which never missed, Sif the hair, which would take root, Freyr *Skíðblaðnir*, which always had a fair wind, could be folded up and put into a pouch.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Grimnismál* 43.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. SAXO's reference in the *Baldr* myth to Þórr's hammer the handle of which was shortened by a blow in battle.

Brokkr gave Óðinn the ring that drips new rings every ninth night. Freyr the boar which could travel both on the ground and in the air and shone at night. Þórr received the hammer which he could never lose, would always strike whatever he wanted, and could be made so small that it could be kept in a pouch. The verdict favoured the hammer, since it would defend the Asa gods against the giants.

When the dwarf wanted to seize Loki, he had already flown, for Loki had shoes which made it possible for him to travel through the air and across water. Therefore Þórr had to fetch Loki and deliver him to the dwarf. When the dwarf wished to behead him, Loki said that it was only his head, not his throat, that belonged to him. The dwarf took a thong and a knife in order to pierce a hole through Loki's lips and sew them together, but the knife would not cut. He then wished that he had his brother's awl — in a flash it was in his hand and with its aid he sewed Loki's lips together.<sup>3</sup>

de Vries discusses the meaning of the different parts of the myth and finds no logical connection between them. He does not exclude the possibility that *Sif's hair* symbolises vegetation and that the hair of gold is a mythical connotation for the *ripe ears of corn*. If by Sif's hair is meant the harvest, cut down in the autumn and growing again in the spring, Loki could be a fertility god. By all means, if this is what the myth means. However, there is no weighty reason why a hidden meaning should be read into the myth and still another unknown factor be added to material that is obscure enough in the first place. There is nothing to suggest that Sif's golden hair has been used as a symbol of ripe corn. "Haar Sifjar" occurs only as the name of a kind of moss. Concerning the method of using a symbolical interpretation for explaining the myth, see p. 213 ff.

The tendency to provide even the most unimportant details with strange names is thought to belong to a later period in Old Norse literature and this stylistic reason is the only one that can be given for describing the myth as relatively late. To describe the myth as late because Loki appears as "evil" is unjustified, since the evil Loki makes his appearance even in what is considered to be the earliest texts.

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. SNORRA Edda (ed. Holtsmark and Helgason p. 90 ff.).

The forging of the three treasures — doubled in the order of events — seems to belong to an ancient type of myths associated with smiths and the art of forging.<sup>4</sup> Ohrt has coupled the motif Loki transforms himself into a gadfly in order to sting Brokkr and spoil the forging with a forging charm which tells how the iron got its strength.<sup>5</sup> Both this epic charm and the tale about Brokkr belong to the conceptions of the difficulties and mystery surrounding casting and forging, of which various legends provide us with examples. In the Chinese legend of Ko-ai and her shoe, we have such a bell-founder's legend of the metal which demands the sacrifice of human blood if the casting is to succeed. The bell-founder's daughter jumps into the molten metal in order to save her father and in doing so she loses one of her shoes. The result is a bell whose tone is more beautiful than any other. After the boom there follows, however, a sighing shhhieh-h-, — this is the girl crying for her shoe.<sup>6</sup> This explicatory legend of the note of the bell reminds us of some Swedish bell-founders' tales, in which it is related that too much silver was put into the bell — it could be heard in the note — or that a ring or some other object had been dropped into the molten metal.<sup>7</sup> Even in early Irish tales

<sup>4</sup> Cf. the creative god as smith in China; KÜHN, *Berichte über den Weltanfang bei den Indochinesen* p. 36. Cf. also the runes about the smith Ilmarinen in a cosmological context found in the *Kalevala*.

<sup>5</sup> OHRT, *Hammerens lyde-jærnets last*. KROHN, *Magische Ursprungsrunen* p. 85.

<sup>6</sup> *Chinese Fairy-Tales*, Peter Pauper Press p. 71, without mention of the source. The story appears, however, also in GORDON-CUMMING, *Wanderings in China* p. 493 in a slightly different form. According to a personal communication from Dr. H. Ikeda this legend is also wellknown in Japanese tradition. The Japanese tradition is, however, often related to the legends of human offering at bridge building. EDSMAN, *Själarnas bro och dödens älv* p. 92 gives references to this special legend.

<sup>7</sup> The Swedish bell-founders' legends conform to other known legends about foreign bodies being dropped into the molten metal. Cf., for example. SARTORI, *Das Buch von deutschen Glocken* p. 6 ff. which even carries a reference to the legend, well known in Sweden, of the bellfounder's apprentice and the jealous master; MORRIS, *Legends of the Bells* p. 127; *California Bell Legends* with literary comments; RAVEN, *The Bells of England*, and WALTERS, *Church Bells of England* contain chiefly technical data, of which the melting down of metal objects for bells can be of some interest, however, in connection with this motif.

forging of weapons is surrounded with mystery and the smiths play an important part, for on their work depends the result of the battle. Thus, for example, Goidhlenn Gabha the smith mixes his blood with the contents of the mould while he forges the sword.<sup>8</sup> Forging or casting legends of this type deserve closer study since they are concerned with a special and ancient province of culture.

The information about Loki's shoes with the aid of which he can travel both through air and water (*lopt ok lög*) is not found in other myths. It can hardly have been a generally known motif as the messenger Loki usually travels in the guise of a bird. There is reason to believe that helpful mythographers have borrowed the winged shoes of Mercury from the Classical tradition to give to his poorer Scandinavian colleague. In *Togail na Tebe* Mercury, too, travels in the guise of a bird like Loki in Scandinavian mythology. Loki's ability to travel *lopt ok lög* can be an authentic trait even if the shoes have been borrowed from the classical tradition.

Loki's part is briefly as follows: Loki has stolen Sif's hair and has managed to incite the dwarfs to forge three treasures, better than those made by the sons of Ivald. He wagers his head and when Brokkr tries to watch him he flies away with the aid of his shoes. Loki is captured by Þórr and his punishment consists of having his lips sewn together after having teased the dwarf by saying that only the head, not the neck, was his.

Of special interest, as far as this investigation is concerned, is the capture of Loki and Loki's punishment. Loki loses his wager and his punishment is to have his lips sewn together. This punishment would perhaps have been more suitable in connection with his abusing in *Lokasenna*, which has already been suggested by other scholars, but it also seems to agree with Loki's impudence when speaking to Brokkr. It is a punishment which goes well with Loki's well-known babbling, and false and brazen conversation. This "punishment" can be compared with the frequent mutilations of the "*trickster*" and is in the same vein as the drastic and clown-like fate of the trickster which never arouses sympathy — only ridicule from the audience. In this myth Þórr seizes the

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<sup>8</sup> Béaloideas 6 p. 168.

*flying Loki* in the same way in which he catches the Loki salmon in the Baldr myth. Thus, *the capture and subsequent punishment* show the connection between, on the one hand, this myth, and on the other the Baldr myth and Lokasenna — even though the form of the punishment is different.

The drastically amusing punishment goes well with the humorous capture of Loki and seems more proper than Loki's being chained to three rocks until Ragnarøk as is the case in the Baldr myth and Lokasenna.

In his investigations of the conceptions of Ragnarøk, Olrik has shown that the *release of the chained monster* at the end of the world is a myth that has its real extension in the Near East and in Eastern Europe. The myths concerning the chaining of the Fenrisúlfr and the fettered Loki thus have their closest equivalents in Caucasian tradition according to Olrik, who was of the opinion that these traditions had been brought from there to Scandinavia by the Goth and that the conception of the evil Loki was already current among the Goths at the time of the migrations. The fettered Loki has also been coupled with the bound Lucifer in the Christian tradition.

That this is not an authentic Loki myth is clear inasmuch as the release of the chained monster at the end of the world is a Eurasian story, not only wellknown in the Caucasus but also in Christian and Classical tradition. The myth of the fettered Loki must, however, have been known already to the composer of Haustlång which is evident from a kenning in this poem. Whether this myth of the fettered monster has been borrowed from Christian<sup>9</sup> Mediaeval tradition or from the literary Classical tradition of Prometheus is difficult to decide. Krohn has quoted on p. 22 ff. some interesting Christian pictorial representations showing prototypes of the wide open jaws of the Fenrisúlfr and, on p. 152 ff., the capture of Loki. Also in the account of Ragnarøk are strong elements of Christian tradition concerning the day of judgement as it is presented in Revelations, Chapters 19 and 20. That Christian Clerical tradition influenced the Old Norse choice of motifs

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<sup>9</sup> Concerning the connection with Christian tradition reference may be made to KROHN, *Skandinavisk mytologi*. Cf. also DE VRIES, *The Problem of Loki* p. 181.

can be seen for example, in the myth of Loki's progeny cf. above p. 162. In the example in question it seems to me, however, that the similarity to the ancient concept of Prometheus is the stronger, since both the classical and the Old Norse myths share the motif of *the animal that torments the chained giant* (the snake that drips venom on Loki, the eagle that pecks Prometheus' liver) and that causes Loki and Prometheus to writhe, making the world shake.

The question of the origin of the myth is here of subordinate importance. What is significant is only the statement that the myth has penetrated into Old Norse tradition and has subsequently been associated with the Loki figure.

As stated, the motif of Loki chained to three rocks is a punishment which cannot be primary. One is therefore justified to some extent to suggest that this motif of the chained giant has been associated with *the capture* of Loki, replacing an earlier punishment, namely the *sewing together* of the lips, which is the only punishment of Loki of which we are aware.

To sum up, we can say that the principal contents of the myth are concerned with myths of smiths and forging explaining how Loki brings the Asa gods their important treasures. Even if this is a later adaptation, it agrees well with Loki's role of provider and reprovider. No direct parallels could be drawn with this myth. The myth may therefore be labelled Old Norse and thus also conceivably authentic with regard to the Loki figure.

## 5. SÖRLAPÁTTIR

### Text

Flateyrbok 1 pp. 275—276:

. . . Odinn unni mikit Freyiu enda var hon allra kuenna fegurst j þann tima. hon atti ser æina skemmu hon var bæde fðgr ok sterk sua at þat segia menn at ef hurdin uar aftr ok læst at æingi madr mætti komaz j skemmuna an uilia Freyiu. Þat var æinn dag er Freyiu vard gengit til steinsins hann var þa opinn. duergar-nir uoro at smida æitt gullmen. þat var þa miog fullgert. Freyiu læitzst uel a menit. duergunum leitzst ok uel a Freyiu. hon falade menit at duergunum baud j moti gull ok silfr ok adra goda gripi. Þeir kuoduzst ekki feþurfui. sagdizst huerr uilia sealfir sinn part selia j meninu ok ekki annat firir uilea hafa en hon lægi sina natt hea huerium þeirra. ok huort sem hon let at þessu komazst betr eda uerr þa keyftu þau þessu. Ok at lidnum .iiij. nattum ok endum ðllum skildaga a(f)henda þeir Freyiu menit. for hon heim j skemmu sina ok let kyrt yfir ser sem ekki hefði j ordit.

### *Fra Odni ok Loka.*

Madr het Farbauti. hann var kall einn ok atti ser kellingu þa er Laufey er nefnd. hon var bade mio ok audþreiflig þui var (hon) Naal kollut. Þau attu ser æinn son barnna sa uar Loki nefndr. hann var ekki mikill uðxstum. orðskar var hann snemma ok skiotligr j bragde. hann hafde fram yfir adra menn uitzsku þa er slægd hætir. hann var miog kyndugr þegar a unga alldri þui var hann kalladr Loki læuiss. hann redzst til Odins j Asgard ok ger-dizst hans madr. Odinn mælti huetuennna eftir honum huat sem hann tok til. enda lagde hann oft storar þrautir firir hann ok leysti

hann þær allar vonu betr af hondum. hann varð ok nálíga allz viss þess er víð bar. sagde hann ok allt Odni þat er hann uísse. Þat er ok sagt at Loki varð viss er Freyia hafði fæíngit menit ok sua huat er hon hafði j moti gefit. sagde hann enn þetta Odni. En er Odinn uard þess viss sagde hann at Loki skyllði na meninu ok fa ser. Loki kúat þat vuenlígt sakir þess at æíngi madr ma j skemmuna komazst firir utan uília Freyiu. Odinn sagde at hann skyllde fara uerða ok æígi aftr koma fyrr en hann hefde náð meninu. Loki sneri þa j brottu ępandi. flestir urðu víð þat katir er Loka gekk lítt til. Hann gengr til skemmu Freyiu ok var hon læst. hann læitade víð inn at komaz ok gat æígi. kuldauedr uar vti mikít ok tok honum fast at kolna. hann varð þa ath æínne flugu. hann flókkte þa vm alla lasa ok með ollum fellum ok gat huergi loft fundit sua at hann mætti jnn komaz. uppi allt hea bustinne ok þo æígi meire boru fann hann enn sem stinga mætti j nal. þá boru bogra(r) hann inn. En er hann kom jnn var hann flenneygr míog ok hugði at ef nokkurir uekti. en hann gat þat set at allt suaf j skemmunni. hann ferr þa jnnar at sæínginne Freyiu ok skyniar þa at hon hefir menit a halse ser ok at nístin horfðu níðr a. Loke verðr þa at einne flo hann setz a kinn Freyiu ok hóggr sua at Freyia uaknar ok snerizst víð ok sofnar aftr. Þa dregr<sup>1</sup> Loki af ser floar haminn lokkar þa af henni menit. lykr þa upp skemmunni ok ferr j burt ok færir Odni. Freyia uaknar vm morgíninn ok ser at opnar eru dyrnar en ekki brotít en menit var j brottu hit goða, hon þíkizst víta huer brógd j munu vera. gengr inn j hóllina þegar hon er klædd firir Óðin konung ok talar um at hann hafui illa latít gera at stela fra henni goðgrip hennar ok bíðr hann fa ser aftr goðgrip sinn. Odinn segir at hon skal þat alldrí fa. sua at æíns hefir hon at þui komizst. nema þu orkir þui at þeir konungar .íj. at .xx. konungar þíona huorum uerde míssat-tír ok berizst með þeim alógum ok atkuæðum at þeir skulu jafnn-skiott upp standa ok beriazst sem þeir adr falla. vtan nókkurr madr kristinn verde sua róskr ok honum fylge sua mikil gífta síns lanardrottíns at hann þóri at ganga til bardaga þessa ok uega með uopnum þessa menn. þa hit fýsta skal . . . þeirra þraut lyktazst. hverium hófðingia sem þat verðr lagít at leysa þa suo or anaúd ok erfuíde síinna farlígra framferða. Freyia jattade þui ok tok víð meninu.



### Notes on *Sqrlapáttir*

In *Sqrlapáttir* Loki takes the part of the provider when he brings Freyja's jewel to Óðinn. The story runs shortly as follows:

Freyja has bestowed her favours on four dwarfs in exchange for a precious jewel. Loki tells Óðinn, and is given the task of obtaining the jewel from Freyja. Forced to do this, Loki takes on the shape of a fly to get into the bed-chamber of the sleeping Freyja. Freyja happens to sleep in such a position that it is impossible for Loki to take the necklace without waking her. He therefore transforms himself into a flea and stings her in order to make her move. Loki throws off his flea guise, takes the jewel and gives it to Óðinn. Óðinn promises to give it back to Freyja in return for a promise from her that two kings shall fight an eternal duel until a brave Christian man ventures to enter into the fight and slay them both.

Behind this story lies the tale of the precious *jewel* and the curse attached to it. Óðinn's odd request from Freyja that *two heroes are to fight forever* evidently goes back to the story of *the curse of the jewel*, which has here been altered to suit the humorously robust mood of the tale. The ensuing fight between Heðinn and Hogni corresponds to the war and misfortunes which accompany the jewel. But in *Sqrlapáttir*, the fight, instead of being explained by the curse, is explained by Freyja's curious promise to Óðinn.

A curse is also attached to *the ring* in *Reginismál* and the *Andvari* myth. It brings its owner ill fortune. The motif reappears in other variants of the *Sigurd* saga. This type of story about a precious jewel with a curse attached to it seems to have been well known in the Middle Ages.

In *Togail na Tebe* occurs a tale, the latter half of which shows traits in common with the variants of the story of the precious jewel and its curse:

. . . And there were other baleful signs there, for thus was maiden Argia, spouse of Polynices, son of Oedipus, with a beautiful golden ornament about her neck, to wit, Harmonia's beautiful wonderful necklace. Wild and very shapely was that find, fateful and baleful was that gift to every one who had it. For it was baleful Vulcan, Hell's woeful smith.

who invented that work, and Vulcan made that golden ornament for Harmonia, to wit, the daughter of Jove's son Mars, the war god, and of Venus, the goddess of love; and therefore did he give that to her in order to cause her ills. For Venus, mighty lady, was Vulcan's lovely spouse; and in Vulcan's despite, Mars got that daughter Harmonia by Venus. So that for that reason, Vulcan made that everlasting gem bringing happy love by looking at the outside of it, of serpents' venoms, toads' poison, filth of slime of fire or of lightning, dark-grey dusky manes of dragons, and flaming blazing stones in the midst. So that it was a blush to gloom, it was boiling of rage, it was a challenging of disease to every one that had it. And the first person on whom it plied its baleful qualities was Harmonia, comely spouse of Cadmus, son of Agenor, by whom Thebes was first built of yore. For that woman was turned into an ugly complaining serpent along with Cadmus, son of Agenor, so that they were together everlastingly hissing in the fine wasted plains. And thereafter that necklace reached Semele, daughter of Cadmus, son of Agenor; and to her Jove made warmest love. And no sooner had that necklace reached her than Juno, daughter of Saturn, to wit, Jove's wife, came to the maiden in the guise of her nurse, and this is what she said to Semele: "Ask thou," said she, "communion and a visit to thee in the form in which he visits Juno." And Semele asked of Jove to visit her thus, and Jove visited her in the guise of broadcast fiery lightning, as he usually did to Juno, so that Semele was at once burnt, for she could not endure the blaze of the divinity that touched her. And it was because of that necklace that a toad wounded that maiden, as those lying heathen fables testify. And it is told that Jocasta, mother of Polynices, had that invidious sinful ornament; and it was by that means that her own son, to wit, Oedipus, had her to wife, and that she bore him two sons, to wit, Eteocles and Polynices. And thereafter Polynices gave it to his own spouse, Argia, Adrastus' beautiful daughter. Mean and contemptible in the eyes of her sister Deipyle, were her own substantial bridal ornaments, as she gazed at that huge golden necklace. And moreover when Eriphyle, Amphiaraus' fair spouse, had seen that thing, an ever craving lust for it seized her, so that she preferred not her life apart from it. And Argia gave her that gift, and thereafter she sent Amphiaraus by force unto the war along with Adrastus and Polynices with the hosts and the seven kings, to carry on the war against the Thebans and Eteocles. Thereafter battle was joined, and Adrastus and

Polynices were defeated, and the seven kings and Polynices were slain there, and no man came out of it alive save Adrastus alone; and Amphiaraus was drowned. As for Alcmaeon, again, son of Amphiaraus, he slew his mother, Eriphyle: for it was she that caused his father, to wit, Amphiaraus, to be drowned. Thereupon madness seized Alcmaeon after his mother was killed by him. After that his wife, to wit, Callirrhoe was she, desired of Alcmaeon the necklace: for she thought it likely that he would obtain health, if the necklace were parted from him. After that the necklace was given her, and for all that none the more did he obtain health. After that his mother's father, to wit, Phegeus, came to Alcmaeon, and he slew Alcmaeon, to wit, his daughter's son, for the crimes of his daughter, Alcmaeon's own mother. Alcmaeon's wife, Callirrhoe, requested of Jove that he would guard her two little sons for her until they could avenge their father; Amphoterus and Acarnan were their names. After that they arose, and gathered a great, an exceeding great, host unto Phegeus; and they declared war on him. Phegeus, again, gathered his household and his soldiers. Nevertheless Phegeus asked of the sons a year's truce with no war waged on him. They said that they would give it, if they might have his head shorn from his neck within that year. Phegeus said that he would not give them his head with his consent. After that they joined battle furiously, wildly, wrathfully side on side, and an uncounted countless host was killed between them. Nevertheless Phegeus was defeated, and the two sons of Alcmaeon came up to him, and said to him: "Hast thou brought Alcmaeon with thee?" said they. "I have not," said he, "but if I had him now, I should bring him." After that Alcmaeon's sons struck off Phegeus' head, and inflicted exceeding great slaughter upon his following, including children and women. Thereafter they came home, having carried off victory and triumph.

*Finit* to the tale of the necklace.<sup>1</sup>

We encounter the motif again in *Beowulf* in the lines about *Brosinga mene*, which tell the story of the fatal jewel. This poem about the most wonderful necklace in the world runs like this:

Nænigne ic under swegle	sēlran hȳrde
hord-māððum hælepa,	syþðan Hāma ætwæg
tō þære byrhtan byrig	Brōsinga mene.

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<sup>1</sup> CALDER, *Togail na Tebe* pp. 49, 51, 53.

sigle ond sinc-fæt;      searo-nīðas flēah  
 Eormenrices;      gecēas ēcne rād.  
 Þone hring hæfde      Higelāc Gēata.  
 nefa Swertinges.      nȳhstan sīðe,  
 sīðþan hē under segne      sinc ealgode,  
 wæl-rēaf werede: . . . . .<sup>2</sup>

[I have not heard of a better treasure hoard of heroes under the sky since Hama carried off to the gleaming castle the necklace of the Brosings, the trinket and the treasure; he fled the malicious hostility of Eormenric; he chose everlasting gain. Hyglac of the Geats, grandson of Swerting, had the ring on his last expedition, when beneath his banner he defended the treasure, guarded the booty of battle. . . .]<sup>3</sup>

The names Brosinga mene and Brisingamen have been compared by many scholars. In truth the jewel — gullmen — is not mentioned by name in SqrĻapáttŨ, but in Þrymskviða and in Snorri Freyja's necklace is called Brisingamen. In Haustlōng Loki is referred to as "Brising girðipjófr" which is most likely an allusion to the theft of the necklace. Behind SqrĻapáttŨ and the above expressions lies probably the same tale of the precious jewel and its curse.<sup>4</sup>

Here I need only mention the well-known fact that Sarv is the name of Sunilda's brother in Jordanes' Ermanarik tale and the name of the other brother is (H)ammi. In Snorri's Ermanarik tale the corresponding names are: Svanhilda, Sqrle and Hamde. The last name corresponds to Hāma in Beowulf's narrative of Ermanarik (Eormenric), who is mentioned in connection with Brosinga mene. In SqrĻapáttŨ Freyja's jewel, which is known in other traditions (Þrymskviða and in Snorri) as Brisingamen, is stolen. Thus SqrĻapáttŨ is linked by the theft of the jewel and the name Sqrle<sup>5</sup> to the Ermanarik tale such as we know it in Jordanes and Snorri.

<sup>2</sup> *Beowulf* 1192—1209, ed. Wrenn p. 125.

<sup>3</sup> After R. K. GORDON.

<sup>4</sup> About the Ermanarik saga see LUKMAN, Ermanaric hos Jordanes og Saxo p. 27.

<sup>5</sup> For the names of Sqrle and his brothers see also Hamðismál. The names Heðinn and Hōgni links the story to this poem as well as to Atlarkviða. The name Sqrle also occurs in other connections, see LIND, Norsk-isländska personnamn col. 1023, also the supplementary volume.

who, in their turn, show kinship to Saxo's and Beowulf's variants of the same tale.

We can sum up the information connected with this incident in the following way:

1. Loki has stolen Brísings girði according to Haustlǫng (Brísing girðipjófr) and Brísingamen according to Snorri (þjófr Brísingamens) in *Skáldskaparmál* 16.
2. Loki has stolen Freyja's gullmen in *Sǫrlapátttr*.
3. Freyja's jewel is called Brísingamen in *Þrymskviða* and in Snorri.
4. Hāma steals Brosinga mene in Beowulf's Eormenric tale.
5. Hāma corresponds to Hamde (Snorri) and (H)ammi (Jordanes) in the Ermanarík tale.
6. Hāma's brother is called Sǫrle by Snorri and Saerk by Jordanes.
7. In *Sǫrlapátttr* the name Sǫrle is mentioned in connection with the theft of Freyja's jewel, elsewhere called Brísingamen; this incident corresponds to the theft of Brosinga mene in Beowulf.

The above should be enough to prove that a connection exists between *Sǫrlapátttr* and other variants of the Ermanarík tale.<sup>6</sup>

It has been suggested that Singasteinn (ags. *sincstān*) in *Húsdrápa* refers to Brísingamen but this is a problem outside the scope of this investigation.<sup>7</sup> The only thing we can note about Loki's part in this poem is that he fights with Heimdallr to get(?) the Singasteinn. It cannot be determined here which myth this incident refers to.

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<sup>6</sup> Loki reveals the infidelity of Freyja to Óðinn, like Bikke in the Ermanarík tales of Snorri and Saxo. Bikke falsely accuses Svanhild of being unfaithful to Iarmeric and she is trampled to death by horses like Sunilda in Jordanes' version of the tale. *Sǫrlapátttr* is to a considerable extent remodelled but its kinship to the Ermanarík tale should be evident from the above details. Cf. SAXO p. 234 ff.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. DE VRIES, *The problem of Loki* p. 136, where are expressed some interesting views on the meaning of the word Singasteinn. Cf. also KIL, *Tjodolvs Haustlǫng* p. 57. BUGGE identifies Hāma in Beowulf with Heimdallr and the jewel with Brosinga mene in *Studien über das Beowulfepos* p. 69. STRÖMBÄCK rightly dismisses Ohlmark's identification of Singasteinn and Brísingamen with the sun, see *Philologisch-kritische Methode und altnordische Religionsgeschichte* p. 13 ff.

It is noteworthy that the part that Loki plays in these myths is that of provider (or re-provider) of a precious object. His transformation into fly and flea is a motif of the folk tale, which usually occurs in connection with the stealing of an object which is worn by or attached to its owner and must therefore be removed from him during his sleep.<sup>8</sup> Therefore this motif cannot give any indication of Loki's real character.

Thus in this variant of the curse of the jewel which is told in SqrĽaþáttir no traits constitutive of the Loki figure can be found as the myth is a variant of a popular tale well-known even outside Scandinavia.

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<sup>8</sup> Cf. Aa 560 and PANZER, Hilde-Gudrun p. 164 ff. Panzer has also wanted to see a similarity between an episode about Óðinn and his wife Frigga which has been inserted into the myth of Othinus and Mitothyn in Saxo's saga of Hadding. Frigga gets the jewels she covets by being unfaithful to Óðinn. Ib. p. 163. Cf. v. D. LEYEN, Der gefesselte Unhold p. 23 note 2. Cf. BP no. 60 p. 102.

## 6. THE FETCHING OF THE HAMMER OR THE MYTH OF THE STOLEN THUNDER IMPLEMENT

The myth of the stolen thunder implement belongs to the cycle of humorous tales about the stupid giant and in Aarne-Thompson's *The Types of the Folk-Tale* it has been denoted as no. 1148 B. The oldest known recording in Scandinavia is *Þrymskviða*. In this droll myth Loki plays the part of the messenger between Ásgarðr and the World of Giants. Loki flies in the falcon-dress of Freyja to Þrymr and learns that Þrymr has stolen the hammer. It is buried deep under the ground and will not be given back until Þrymr has received Freyja as his wife. The angered Freyja tells of her displeasure in a form which is reminiscent of the episode of Gro and Gram<sup>1</sup> quoted by Saxo in the tale of Skjold and Gram. Heimdallr suggests that Þórr is dressed up as a bride and that Loki goes with him as a bridesmaid. Loki explains cunningly the odd appearance and demeanour of the bride. When the hammer is brought in for the marriage ceremony, Þórr grabs his hammer and kills Þrymr. This myth which is interesting, among other things, for its description of the wedding,<sup>2</sup> contains the combination Þórr—Loki and shows Loki as a rover or messenger, the servant of Þórr, with the gift of the gab.<sup>3</sup> No constitutive Loki

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<sup>1</sup> SAXO p. 16 ff.

<sup>2</sup> CARLSSON, *Nyckeln som rättslig symbol* p. 85.

<sup>3</sup> In addition to the literature concerning Loki, *Þrymskviða* has been discussed by HALLBERG in *Om Þrymskviða*. Hallberg stresses the importance of regarding the tale as poetry. He is probably right when he underlines the fact that *Þrymskviða* is a work of poetry made by an individual. That does, however, not mean that the contents of this poetical work should also be a

traits can be established in this variant. The cunning and the glib tongue are necessary qualities for the hero in the cycle of the stupid giant. Whoever takes the part of the giant's adversary must be provided with these qualities as they are necessary for the plot. The fact that Loki appears as the servant of the thunder god is of no significance for the Loki figure as such. Because *the part of the servant or son of the thunder god* belongs to the *story* of the stolen thunder implement. When Loki takes the part of the servant of the thunder god in this humourous myth of the stolen thunder implement he must automatically appear as the companion of Þórr and connected with the thunder.

In the Lappish tradition it is the thunder god himself who has been imprisoned by a giant in a cave. The Earth is suffering because of the drought until, at last, one of the servants of the thunder god succeeds in rescuing him.<sup>4</sup>

In the Estonian and Finnish traditions the thunder implement is stolen from the *sleeping* thunder god by the devil or the son of thunder. In Þrymskviða it is hinted that the hammer was stolen during Þórr's sleep (Angry was Þórr when he woke up . . .). In some of the Estonian variants the thief turns himself into a flea in order to make the thunder god scratch himself, so that he can take the hammer and disappear with it. A parallel motif occurs in Sörlapáttir (cf. p. 50).

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fabrication of an individual — that possibility is ruled out by the fact that the myth of the stolen thunder implement is found in various connections in a similar form. One can compare this to the way — and right — of the modern poet who uses a classical motif for a modern poem. If, for example, the Swedish poet Hjalmar Gullberg has been inspired by a classical myth, his poem is still an original in spite of his inspiration being drawn from a traditional source. So far Þrymskviða is an independent work of an unknown master, but the material or the plot, the incitement of the poem is nevertheless traditional and taken from the myth of the stolen thunder implement.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. KROHN, *Skandinavisk mytologi* p. 203. This story reminds us of the primitive myths of the planning of the world which explain what happens if nature is prevented or changed in its course. This is shown in myths — often humourous ones — which describe how, for example, the sun is snared and the world remains in darkness until the sun is released again, or how the wind originally was too strong but was subjugated by a Culture-hero to blow forever after as it does now, etc., etc.



In the Estonian and Finnish tradition the thunder god becomes the servant of the devil and goes out on a *fishing expedition* with him. The devil boasts that he has stolen the god's instrument and the thunder god makes him produce it; and when the thunder god gets it in his hand he plays upon it so that the devil runs away. The similarity with Hymiskviða and its fishing expedition, which takes place before Þórr is allowed to borrow the kettle for the feast of the Aesir, has been brought to attention by many scholars, e.g. Grimm, Olrik and Krohn. Thus v. Schroeder compares the name Thrumketill with Torkill, i.e. thunder itself, the kettle is compared to a kettle-drum or drum, i.e. the instrument that causes the thunder.<sup>5</sup>

One of the Estonian variants of the stolen thunder implement has been reported by Kreutzwald (cf. p. 68); this variant must be regarded with a certain reservation.<sup>6</sup> It mentions the motif of the thief who turns himself into a flea and that motif could possibly have been taken from the myth of the jewel Brisingamen and added by Kreutzwald who was obviously well acquainted with the Old Norse literature as well as the Finnish runic poetry.

Even if we take no account of Kreutzwald's variant, there still remains a well represented tradition of the stolen thunder implement in Finland and Estonia, which cannot be explained only by the existence of the known Scandinavian material.<sup>7</sup> The relationship between the Finnish and Estonian versions and the other Scandinavian variants of the Fetching of the Hammer — and Hymiskviða — has to be discussed in a wider context, as the Lappish, Estonian, and Finnish popular literature, collectively, in certain cases show similarities with Scandinavian, in other cases with Russian, Finnish-Ugrian and Turki-Tartarian tradition. Only a closer knowledge of this East European and Asiatic material would make it possible to establish with certainty the country of origin of this myth.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>5</sup> v. SCHROEDER, *Germanische Elben* p. 83.

<sup>6</sup> LOORITS, *Das Märchen vom gestohlenen Donnerinstrument bei den Esten* p. 101.

<sup>7</sup> KROHN, *Übersicht über einige Resultate der Märchenforschung* p. 124 ff. Cf. OLRIK, *Danske Studier* 1905 p. 129. CELANDER, *op. cit.* p. 103 ff.

<sup>8</sup> KROHN, *Skandinavisk mytologi* p. 207 quotes two variants from Rou-

*Þrymskviða* has been the foundation of the later popular songs of *Þrymlur* from the Fifteenth Century<sup>9</sup> and the "Torsvisa" (Song of Þórr) which were recorded in Denmark in the Sixteenth Century and in Sweden in the Seventeenth Century. It has also been known in Norway according to information given by Peder Syv.<sup>10</sup>

As far as this investigation is concerned, it is enough to establish that it is a question of a traditional humorous myth and, therefore, no constitutive Loki traits can be found.

However, Loki is pictured in the *Geirrøðr* myth and in *Þórsdrápa* as well as in the Journey to *Útgarðr* as Þórr's companion. There his role as servant of the thundergod does not lie in the tales themselves. We must then ask, is his role in these stories as the thundergod's servant an authentic trait. Or is this trait due to the fact that his part in *Trymskviða* and its many popular variants as the thundergod's servant has been vivid and popular in peoples memory? The question cannot be answered for the moment.

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mania. At the time of the creation God entrusts the thunder and lightning to the Devil. The Devil misuses them and therefore God sends Elijah out to steal them from the Devil who is sleeping under a thick cover of ice. LIUNGMAN, *Sveriges samtliga folksagor* 3 p. 324 also quotes an Arabian variant from the Thirteenth or Fourteenth Century in which Mohammed's son-in-law is the central character. KROHN, *Übersicht über einige Resultate der Märchenforschung* p. 125 gives the same reference to WESSELSKI in *Archiv Orientalní* 2 p. 430. Mohammed's son-in-law is dressed as a bride looking as fierce as Þórr. This however is not a variant of the story of the stolen thunder instrument.

<sup>9</sup> *Rímnasafn* p. 278.

<sup>10</sup> BUGGE and MOE, *Torsvisen i sin norske form* p. 14.

# LOKI IN OTHER MYTHS

## 7. THE GEIRRØÐR MYTH

### Text

The Geirrøðr myth from Snorra Edda ed. Anne Holtsmark and Jón Helgason pp. 87—90:

Þá mælti Ægir: „Mikill þótti mér Hrungrir fyrir sér. Vann Þórr meira þrekvirki nokkvot þá er hann átti við tröll?“

Þá svarar Bragi: „Mikillar frásagnar er þat vert er Þórr fór til Geirrøðargarða; þá hafði hann eigi hamarinn Miðluni eða megingiarðar eða iárngreipr, ok olli því Loki; hann fór með honum; þvíat Loka hafði þat hent þá er hann flaug einu sinni at skemta sér með valsham Friggjar at hann flaug fyrir forvitni sakar í Geirrøðargarða ok sá þar holl mikla, settiz ok sá inn of glugg. En Geirrøðr leit í móti honum ok mælti at taka skyldi fuglinn ok  
10 fœra honum. En sendimaðr komz nauðuliga á hallarvegginn, svá var hann hár; þat þótti Loka gott er hann sótti erfiðlega til hans ok ætlaði sér stund at fliúga eigi upp fyrr en hann hafði farit allt torleiðit. En er maðrinn sótti at honum, þá beinir hann fluginn ok spyrnir við fast, ok eru þá fœtrnir fastir. Var Loki  
15 tekinn þar hōndum ok fœrðr Geirrøði iðtni. En er hann sá augu hans, þá grunaði hann at maðr myndi vera ok bað hann svara, en Loki þagði. Þá læsti Geirrøðr Loka í kistu ok sveltir hann þar .iii. mánuðr. En þá er Geirrøðr tók hann upp ok beiddi hann orða, ok sagði Loki hvern hann var, ok til fiðrlausnar vann hann  
20 Geirrøði þess eiða at hann skyldi koma Þór í Geirrøðargarða svá at hann hefði hvárki hamarinn né megingiarðar.

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4 Geirraðar- *WU* (*slik også i det flg.*). 12 hefði *WTU*. 18 mánaði *WT*.  
19 -lauslar *skr. R*. 21 hamarrinn *skr. R*; hamar *WT*.

Þór(r) kom til gistingar til gýgiar þeirrar er Gríðr er kollut; hon var móðir Víðars hins þogla. Hon sagði Þór satt frá Geirrøði at hann var iqtunn hundvís ok illr viðreignar. Hon léði honum megingiarða ok iárngreipr er hon átti ok staf sinn er 25 heitir Gríðarvqlr.

Þá fór Þórr til ár þeirrar er Vimur heitir, allra à mest. Þá spenti hann sik megingiørðum ok studdi forstreymis Gríðarvql, en Loki helt undir megingiarðar. Ok þá er Þórr kom á miðia ána, þá óx svá miøk áin at uppi braut á qxl honum. Þá kvað 30 Þórr þetta:

„Vaxattu nú, Vimur,  
allz mik þik vaða tíðir  
iqtna garða í;  
veiztu ef þú vex,  
at þá vex mér ásmegin  
iafnhátt upp sem himinn!“

35

Þá sér Þórr uppi í gliúfrum nokkvorum at Giálp, dóttir Geirrøðar, stóð þar tveim megin árinna, ok gerði hon árvoxtinn. Þá tók Þórr upp ór ánni stein mikinn ok kastaði at henni ok mælti 40 svá: „At ósi skal á stemma!“ Eigi misti hann þar er hann kastaði til. Ok í því bili bar hann at landi ok fekk tekit reynirunn nokkvorn ok steig svá ór ánni. Því er þat orðtak haft at reynir er biqrg Þórs.

En er Þórr kom til Geirrøðar, þá var þeim félogum vísat fyrst 45 í geitahús til herbergis, ok var þar einn stóll til sætis, ok sat þar Þórr. Þá varð hann þess varr at stóllinn fór undir honum upp at ræfri. Hann stakk Gríðarveli upp í raptana ok lét sígaz fast á stólinn; varð þá brestr mikill ok fylgði skrækr mikill. Þar hqfðu erit undir stólinum døtr Geirrøðar, Giálp ok Greip, ok hafði 50 hann brotit hrygginn í báðum. Þá lét Geirrøðr kalla Þór í hql-lina til leika. Þar vóro eldar stórir eptir endilangri hqllinni. En er Þórr kom í hqllina gagnvart Geirrøði, þá tók Geirrøðr með tng iárnsíu glóandi ok kastar at Þór. En Þórr tók í móti með

25 -greipa WU. 32 Vimra W. 47 þar Þórr] Þórr þar WTU, +á T. 48 -veli WU, -væli R, -vql T. 49 mikill (2)] ÷ WTU. 50 Greip] Gneip U. 51 báðum] +þá kvað Þórr: Eino neytta ek allz megins iqtna gørðum í, þá er Giálp ok Gneip døtr Geirraðar villdo hefia mik til himins U. lét] lætr WTU. 52 hql-linni] hql WTU. í hqllina] ÷ WTU.

- 55 iárngreipum ok færir á lopt síuna, en Geirrøðr hlióp undir iárn-súlu at forða sér. Þórr kastaði síunni ok laust gognum súluna ok gognum Geirrøð ok gognum vegginn ok svá firir útan ⟨í⟩ iqrðina.“  
Eptir þessi sögu hefir ort Eilífr Guðrúnar son í Þórsdrápu.

### Survey of the Motifs in the Geirrøðr Myth

<i>Eilífr Guðrúnarson, Þórsdrápa</i>	<i>Snorri, Skáldskaparmál Ch. 4</i>
	Loki in the guise of a bird gets stuck in a loop-hole in the giant Geirrøðr's house and is not freed until he promises to bring back Þórr without his hammer and magic belt
Loki tempts Þórr to go out without his weapons by telling him that there is no danger along that road	
Þórr and Þjalfi start to travel	Þórr and Loki start to travel
	They spend the night with Gríðr who gives Þórr a magic belt, staff and iron gloves
They come to rivers overflowing with spears(?), with traps set to catch waders, slippery stones on the bottom and strong undercurrents	Þórr comes to the Vimur river Þórr uses <i>Gríðr's staff</i> when he wades through the water
	Loki hangs on to Þórr's belt
Rocks fall on top of Þórr	
	The water comes up to Þórr's neck
Þórr says that his power will grow to the vaults of heaven if the giantess' squirt does not run dry	Þórr bids the river to rise no more, for his divine power will increase if it rises
The giantesses produced the sword flowing liquid which rose as high as Þórr's neck	Þórr sees that a giantess is creating the river. He throws a stone at her and says that the river will be stemmed in the mouth
	Þórr never failed to hit a target
Þjalfi raises himself on the shield	
Þórr wades across the river with the aid of <i>Gríðr's staff</i>	
Þórr strikes the giantess with the staff	

<i>Eilífr Guðrúnarson, Þórsdrápa</i>	<i>Snorri, Skáldskaparmál Ch. 4</i>
The fire could not singe the (rowan?) trees on the helpful shore <sup>1</sup>	Þórr seizes hold of a rowan tree and climbs out of the river. The rowan is therefore known as Þórr's help
The fight continues on the shore	Þórr and Loki come to Geirrøðr's house
Þórr seats himself on a chair beneath which a giantess is hiding	Þórr seats himself on the only chair
The chair is lifted up and pressed against heaven	The chair is lifted up and pressed against the ceiling in order that Þórr may be crushed against the beams
Þórr breaks the giantesses' backs	Þórr places Gríðr's staff against the rafters and pushes the chair down
With his tongs, the marksman (Geirrøðr) throws a molten piece of gold at Þórr	The giant's daughters, who are sitting under the chair, have their backs broken
Þórr catches the piece of gold in the air	Geirrøðr throws a glowing iron bar at Þórr
Þórr throws the gold through the giant's mouth into his body. The house is shaken when the giant's head falls under an old pillar <sup>2</sup>	Þórr catches the bar with his iron gloves
	Þórr throws back the bar and it passes through a pillar, through Geirrøðr and out through the wall

### The Motifs in Saxo's Narrative of Thorkillus

In the review of Saxo's story the motifs which have parallels in the Geirrøðr myth will be printed in italics. Saxo's long novel must here be cut down considerably. The greater part of the story is taken up by a description of the horrors and *dangers on the way to Geirrøðr's house*. It is just the lively rendering of details which is Saxo's strong point and therefore a summary of his work cannot do it justice.

<sup>1</sup> According to LINDQUIST's interpretation of the Þórsdrápa, *Norröna Lovkväden* 1 p. 99. Cf. also JÓNSSON B 1 139, who does not follow this interpretation.

<sup>2</sup> The review of the motifs follows LINDQUIST's translation of Þórsdrápa in *Norröna Lovkväden* 1 pp. 94—104.

The Danish king Gorm (Gorminus) learns from the Ice-lander Thorkillus of Geirrøðr's (Geruthus) house and its fabulous treasures. But to get there one must sail across the sea which surrounds the Earth, leave the sun and the light and wander down into a chaotic world where darkness prevails. (The story goes on to tell of how Thorkillus is put in charge of three hundred men, how the ships are fitted out to resist the dangers, the departure, the first hardships they encounter and how they finally arrive at the house of Guthmundus, Geirrøðr's brother.)

They come to a river which separates the world of man from the world of demons — no mortal may cross this river. Thorkillus warns his men that they are not to eat, drink or look at the women in Guthmundus' house where they are going to spend the night. Guthmundus takes them across the river. They come to a city with human heads impaled on stakes. Thorkillus throws a greased horn to the watch-dogs and leads his men through the gate into the stenching city inhabited by ghostlike beings. Then they reach Geirrøðr's house. Thorkillus warns his men that they are not to touch anything — if they do *their hands will be tied with inextricable ties*. Geirrøðr's rock-house was in a state of decay, doors and windows were covered with soot and dirt, the roof was made of spears and the floor was covered with snakes. Ghosts were sitting on iron chairs separated from each other by grills. Some of them were keeping watch at the door, some were making a din with the aid of logs tied together, and others were pulling at a goatskin. An old man whose body was pierced was sitting next to three women. Thorkillus told his men that it was the god *Thor who had once run a red-hot iron bar through Geirrøðr and that the bar had also passed on through the rock! The women he had killed with his enormous wedge and their backs were broken*. (The story continues with a description of Geirrøðr's treasures, how the men start to sack his house, the subsequent attack by the ghosts which only twenty of the men survive. With these Thorkillus returns home.)

The next part of the story describes Thorkillus in his old age pondering over the abode of the soul after death. He goes out to find Útgarðaloki (Utgarthilocus), who dwells in eternal darkness and finds him chained in a cave. He takes one of Útgarðaloki's hairs, it is long and stiff like a spear, they have to hurry away because of the stench which exudes and many of the men are killed by the venom. On the way he calls on and sacrifices to the God of the Whole World,

and after a successful voyage Thorkillus and his men reach lighter regions and finally the world of man. At last they come to Germany (sic), which by that time has been converted to Christianity and there he is instructed in the true religion. When he returns home he is able to tell Gorm about the new religion and also about the nature of Útgardaloki. When Gorm learns that he has been worshipping a false god and what the prison of the damned looks like, he dies in despair while Thorkillus is still telling his story.<sup>1</sup>

### Notes on the Geirrøðr Myth

All scholars agree that there is a connection between the Scandinavian texts. What has been discussed is which text contains the original tradition. Does *Þórsdrápa*, considered to be the oldest known text, preserve the original tradition? Some scholars, among them Schneider, have advanced the opinion that the lays and rhymes represent the original Scandinavian form, while the prose narratives are secondary corrupt versions of the original lays. Against this interpretation Mohr<sup>2</sup> has a different and well-reasoned opinion. Mohr has investigated the Geirrøðr myth, especially the Vimur episode. He has chosen this myth on purpose to show that prose narratives form the foundations of the lays. Mohr points to several passages in *Þórsdrápa* which are vague, taking it for granted that the audience knows certain prose narratives where the action is clearly explained, as, for example, in Snorri.

Gríðr's staff, for example, is a motif without any function or meaning if it does not refer to the fact that Þórr went out without weapons, belt or gloves and that he was given the weapons he needed by Gríðr. In the subsequent course of events the bar or staff has the function of helping him through the Vimur river and of breaking the backs of the giant's daughters — who are sitting under the chair — when Þórr places the staff against the

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<sup>1</sup> Extract from SAXO p. 238 ff.

<sup>2</sup> MOHR, Thor im Fluss p. 228.



rafters and pushes it down in order to avoid being crushed himself.<sup>3</sup> The scanty description of the skaldic poem can take the liberty of omitting and only alluding to things which are presumed well known to the audience. The prose narrative, on the other hand, must fulfil the epic conditions of a complete and well motivated plot. The skaldic poem is sufficient in itself and does not need to explain or make things clearer; its strength does not lie in its epic descriptions but in the artistry of its outward form. In a prose narrative an introduction which motivates the subsequent course of events is necessary, not on mythological but on epic grounds. The only introduction we know is the one in Snorri describing how Loki in the guise of a bird gets stuck in Geirrøðr's loop-hole. In Snorri that is the explanation to the promise forced on Loki to lure Þórr into going to Geirrøðr's house without his weapons and magic belt. It is a parallel to the introductory motif of the Þjazi myth — Loki gets stuck and in order to be released has to promise to bring Iðunn to the giant.

Saxo uses a rather similar motif: Thorkillus warns his men not to touch anything in Geirrøðr's house; if they do so, they will be bound with invisible ties. Snorri and Saxo are, however, using the motif in completely different ways. With the latter it is a motif of horror in a journey to the Other World. The motif of the bird which gets stuck in the loop-hole has been compared by Bugge<sup>4</sup> with the following episode in Jacobus a Voragine concerning the blessed virgin Justina: "*Acladius quoque arte dyabolica mutatus in passerem cum ad fenestram Justinae volasset, mox ut virgo eum adspexit, non passer, sed Acladius apparuit angustiarique nimis coepit ac tremere, quia nec fugere poterat nec salire. Timens vero Justina, ne caderet et creparet, eum per scalam deponi fecit et admonens, ut a sua vesania cessaret, ne juxta leges tamquam*

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<sup>3</sup> In the last verse of Þórsdrápa Þórr's hammer is, however, mentioned — a contradiction to the concept of the unarmed Þórr. Whether this is due to a slip of the pen by the editor and to the fact that it is Þórr's traditional weapon, is impossible to decide.

<sup>4</sup> BUGGE, *Norsk Sagaskrivning og Sagafortælling i Irland* pp. 195—196. For other variants Bugge refers to ZAHN, *Cyprian von Antiochien und die deutsche Faustsage* with which variants I cannot find any great similarity.

maleficus puniretur. Ista omnia secundum figmenta dyabolica ad quandam apparentiam fiebant." In this connection should also be mentioned the similar fairy tale motif of type Aa 432 The Prince as a Bird (cf. BP 2 p. 26 ff.). A form of this motif is found already with Marie de France in Lay of Yonec. It could be a similar tradition which forms the foundation of Snorri's tale and which has been adapted by him or an earlier editor to fit into the Geirrøðr myth. However, the motif of Loki in the guise of a falcon or in a bird guise borrowed from Freyja is not too uncommon and can have been adapted by the editor to form the introduction to the Geirrøðr myth.

If, like Mohr, one assumes that prose narratives are the bases of Þórsdrápa and its variants,<sup>5</sup> these prose narratives should have had an introduction to motivate the fact that Þórr is enticed to go out without his weapons. It becomes evident already in Þórsdrápa that, in the Scandinavian tradition, Loki is the person who entices Þórr to go out "unarmed on safe roads". Whether, on the other hand, the motif of Loki getting stuck in the house of Geirrøðr was included in the earliest Scandinavian version is uncertain.

The myth of the Vimur river is also found in an Estonian tale concerning Kalewipoeg<sup>6</sup> about which v. Schroeder writes:

Ein im wesentlichen übereinstimmendes Abenteuer wird von dem Kalwipoeg im XV. Gesange, V. 340—677, berichtet. Reisemüde auf dem Rasen eingeschlafen, spürt der Estenheld wie laue Wellen ihn umrieseln, doch träumt er zunächst noch weiter. Aber das Wasser steigt und droht ihn endlich zu überwältigen. Da erwacht er aus dem Schlafe, rafft sich auf und sieht: Una de magicis virginibus, filia magi ventorum, conquiniscebat in montibus gignebatque ex se undam calidam, altero pede in hoc jugo, altero virgo stabat in illo crucibusque varicatis conformicabat angustas fauces amnis effundi ore crinito.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. MANNHARDT, Germanische Mythen p. 199; UHLAND, Der Mythos von Thor p. 136 note 74.

<sup>6</sup> v. SCHROEDER, Germanische Elben und Götter beim Estenvolke pp. 77—78. Cf. also SCHIEFNER, Über die Estnische Sage vom Kalewipoeg col. 297, and LÖWE, Kalewipoeg p. 188.

Aus der Mitte des Gewölbes  
 Stürzte sich ins Tal das Bächlein,  
 Weit die Wiese überschwemmend  
 Und den Schläfer auf dem Rasen  
 Ungestüm ertränken wollend.  
 Kalews edler Sohn, der Starke,  
 Aufrecht sitzend auf dem Lager,  
 Sah mit Unmut und Erstaunen  
 Auf die reiche Sprudelquelle,  
 Die den warmen Strom erzeugte.

Quum puellae jocum advertisset, vir fortis secum ita: Si  
 fontem cunearo rimamque obturaro, aquarum radios mora-  
 bor effusionemque retardabo.

Von dem Ungefähr geleitet  
 Fiel der Stein ihm in die Hände,  
 Der ihm unterm Kopf gelegen.  
 Diesen mit den Fingern fassend,  
 Zielte Kalews Sohn ein Weilchen  
 In des Wasserstrahles Richtung  
 Und entsandte dann ihn sausend  
 Nach dem vorgehaltnen Ziele.  
 Und wo fiel der Wurfstein nieder?  
 Grade an dem rechten Orte,  
 In dem Mittelpunkt der Quelle.

In ipsum os crinitum fertur obseransque sic ostia tam-  
 quam obturamentum clausit canales, ne per aquarum portas  
 jam effunderetur amnis.

Die Riesenjungfrau schreit vor Schmerz laut auf und ruft  
 um Hilfe, doch vergeblich, sie muss eines elenden Todes  
 sterben.

This variant which has been recorded by Kreutzwald contains several details of the Vimur episode which correspond so closely with Snorri's narrative that it must be assumed that a connection between the two exists. The fact that the story comes from Kreutzwald makes it necessary to regard it with a certain reservation. As was stressed on p. 58, Kreutzwald worked under the influence of the romantic spirit of his time with a view to creating a national epos based on known models and we cannot discard the possibility that the story is a reconstruction made by Kreutzwald with the aid of Finnish runic poetry and Scandinavian Edda literature.

The description of the Vimur river is burlesque and comical in Snorri, not so in Eilífr and Saxo. In Saxo's story the Vimur river has become a boundary between the worlds of the living and the dead with the narrow bridge leading across it. The narrow bridge across a dangerous river is a common motif in Mediaeval European katabasis tradition as well as in the Asiatic tradition. It is also found in North American Indian myths of journeys to the other world. In Saxo the description of the journey to Geirrøðr's house has been developed into a journey to Hell, while Snorri and Eilífr treat it as a visit to the world of giants in order to kill some of them. In Saxo we find the ornamental motifs which are common in the katabasis tradition describing the horrors (ceiling and floor of nails and snakes), the weird and inexplicable sights, which are later explained to the hero. (The men who make a din with logs that are tied together, the men who pull at the goatskin — though an explanation of these sights is not given here.)<sup>7</sup> These descriptions can be compared with verses 38—39 in *Völuspá*, as well as with the journey to the underworld in Saxo's Hadding tale, mentioned below on p. 133.

There is, however, a possibility that the goatskin and the stench are not merely ornamental motifs of the description of the underworld, but might have some connection with the description of Geirrøðr as the Geirrøðr of the tanner's tools given by Þjóðólfr Arnórsson.<sup>8</sup>

In the Finnish runic tradition of Väinämöinen and his journeys to the underworld,<sup>9</sup> a similar literary influence from the katabasis tradition, so popular in the Middle Ages, becomes evident. In his work on Väinämöinen Haavio discusses the question of whether Väinämöinen's journey to the underworld can be regarded as a shamanistic trance journey or if it is based on the literary European tradition of the Orpheus type.

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<sup>7</sup> The game with the skin is reminiscent of the man and the woman who wrangle about the bed covering of fur. The explanation of this sight was that they were man and wife who had been quarrelling in life and now had to go on after death. The moral: couples who have lived in harmony are quite content with one skin. Cf. HOLMBERG, *Finno-Ugric*, Siberian p. 491.

<sup>8</sup> JÓNSSON, B 1 p. 350.

<sup>9</sup> HAAVIO, *Väinämöinen* pp. 83 ff., 105.

Related to these journeys to the underworld are the remarkable stories of sea voyages like Sindbad the Sailor, the Odyssey and the Voyages of St. Brendan. Saxo has welded together the myths of Geirrøðr and of Útgarðaloki (see p. 81) into one continuous story. In Saxo's work Útgarðaloki is the fettered devil in the Underworld. The tests of strength and delusions to which Þórr and his men are subjected by Útgarðaloki in Snorri's narrative, are here completely absent. The humorous motifs of exaggeration<sup>10</sup> in the Útgarðr myth do not occur at all in Saxo's version. The delusions of the Útgarðr myth have been compared by many scholars with those in Gylfaginning. The description of the journey to the *Underworld* is thus typical only of Saxo, while the descriptions in Snorri and Eilífr only are concerned with the world of giants.<sup>11</sup> Saxo's account of the death of Geirrøðr and his daughters corresponds completely with those of Snorri and Eilífr. The backs of the daughters are broken and Geirrøðr is pierced by a spear. Eilífr and Snorri complete the account: Geirrøðr threw a redhot iron bar at Þórr who caught it and ran it through Geirrøðr's body. This is one of the motifs which leads us on to the Celtic tale of Táin Bó Fraich, where Froech catches Ailill's spear in the air and throws it back.

### **Táin Bó Fraich and its Importance to the Geirrøðr Myth**

In his excellent work, *Studies in Irish Literature and History*, James Carney has pointed to the relationship between the contents of Táin Bó Fraich (abbreviated TBF) and the following three sources which form its foundation:

1. The story of Rhydderch's ring in Jocelin's *Vita Kentegerni*.
2. Aided Fergus maicc Roig, the story of the death of Fergus mac Roig.
3. Book II ch. 27 in Adomnán's *Vita Columbae*.

<sup>10</sup> THOMPSON, Motif-Index. F 531.5.2.; 531.5.3 and 4.; 531.5.1.1.; 531.3.2.2.; 531.3.4. HÖTTGES, Die Sage vom Riesenspielzeug.

<sup>11</sup> Concerning the world of giants as the world of the dead and the giants as corpse eating demons, cf. SCHÖNING, Dödsriger i nordisk hedentro. Against this opinion v. SYDOW advanced some well argued reasons in *Jättarna i mytologi och folktradition* and in *Mytologiens jättar* p. 136 ff.

In addition to this, Carney points out on p. 83 that the tale of TBF “has been heavily influenced by ecclesiastic sources: a life of Brigit, the life of St. Columba by Adomnán, the life of Kentigern, the life of the Breton St. Samson and by Isidore of Seville.”

The question is to what an extent TBF can have influenced the final form of the Geirrøðr myth as we meet it in Þórsdrápa and in Snorri. The differences can be explained by the fact that the pattern of TBF has been adapted to different mythological circumstances in Scandinavia. As has been pointed out already, a prose narrative must have been the basis of the poetic version (p. 65) of rather the same type as Snorri’s. If the motif of “Loki gets stuck in Geirrøðr’s house” occurs also in this form of the prose narrative cannot, however be established. Not that this point is of great importance. It is only in the account of the journey to Geirrøðr’s castle that the traits corresponding with TBF can be traced.

*Comparison between the Motifs in Táin Bó Fraich  
and in the Myth of Geirrøðr*

Ailill lures Froech to swim	Loki lures Þórr to go to Geirrøðr
Ailill and Medb say the pond is without dangers	Loki says the road is without dangers
Froech swims across the pond to fetch a branch of rowan	Þórr saves himself from the rising river by means of grabbing at the rowan (Snorri)
Froech has taken off his belt in order to swim	Þórr is without his belt and gloves (Snorri)
Froech is without weapon	Þórr is without weapon
Froech is attacked by a water monster	Þórr almost drowns in the rising river (caused by Geirrøðr’s daughters)
Froech gets a sword from Findabair	Þórr throws a stone at the giantess
Froech kills the water monster with the sword	Þórr got a staff from Gríðr (and a belt and gloves) which saved him from the river
	Loki (Þjalfi) hangs by the belt
	Þórr continues his journey to Geirrøðr and the <i>other world</i> and kills Geirrøðr’s daughters and Geirrøðr

Ailill throws a spear at Froech who catches the spear	Geirrøðr throws a glowing rod at Þórr who takes it with his iron gloves
Froech throws back the spear at Ailill but misses (hits A. in the story of the death of Fergus)	Þórr throws back the rod so that it pierces Geirrøðr
Froech kills the water monster	cf above (Þórr kills the giant's daughter with a stone)
Froech is carried by mysterious women of the <i>Other world</i> and returns completely cured	cf above
The story goes on with the ring of Polyfem and the recovery of the stolen cattle	

In the subsequent course of events occurs a motif describing how the monsters jump up and cling to Froech's belt in the same way as Þjalfi (Loki) hung on to Þórr. Carney traces this confused motif back to the story of St Samson who kills the dragon by throwing his belt over it and then dragging it behind. In the Celtic tale TBF, Froech is tricked into going for a swim in a "safe" pond. The fact that Froech was asked to swim in order to show his skill in swimming, explains both why he went into the dangerous pond and why Froech is without his belt and his weapons when he is attacked by the monster. *The Scandinavian tradition which lacks the swimming motif has to provide another explanation for the fact that Þórr is without his weapons* (and without his belt and gloves). So it becomes Loki's task to lure them from him. In Þórsdrápa we are not told in which way this is done. In Snorri, the fact that Þórr does not have his weapons with him is explained by Loki's promise to Geirrøðr to entice Þórr to come there without weapons, in order to get out of his own plight. The Vimur river can be regarded as an equivalent of the pond. In the Scandinavian myth it is a question of an ordinary journey where Þórr has to cross a river, the equivalent of the pond and its hidden dangers in TBF. The motif of Froech swimming with the rowan berries is meant, as Carney points out, to be a motif purely concerned with colours; and it is of this beautiful sight that Findabair loves to speak:

This is what Findabair used to say afterwards when she saw any beautiful thing: that it was more beautiful for her to see Froech coming across the (river) Dublind, the body

for shining whiteness and the hair for loveliness, the face for shapeliness, the eye so blue-grey, and he a gentle youth without fault or blemish, face broad above, narrow below. and he straight and perfect, the branch with the red berries between the throat and the white face. This is what Findabair used to say: that she had never seen anything half or a third as beautiful as he.<sup>12</sup>

The exquisite coloristic effect of the Celtic romantic "novelle" was lost in the Old Norse version when the motif was changed into a burlesque one: the rowan to which Þórr clings when he crawls out of the river. A woman — the true-love in the romantic Celtic tale — hands over the sword which is to kill the water monster, but Gríðr gives Þórr the staff which is to help him through the rising river and with which he later kills the daughters of Geirrøðr. Þórr throws a stone at the giant's daughter — and he never missed, like Lugaid "who had never failed to hit a target".<sup>13</sup> Ailill who throws the spear at Froech corresponds to Geirrøðr who throws the red-hot iron bar which Froech, like Þórr, *catches and throws back*. In the Celtic tale this scene takes place while Froech is in the water, in the Scandinavian tale in Geirrøðr's house. In the Scandinavian tale *the scene and situation have been adapted to suit Þórr in his capacity of giant slayer*. Drastic and burlesque features have replaced the exquisite representation of the romantic novelle.

The features common to the Irish TBF tradition and the Scandinavian Geirrøðr myth seem to be too numerous and too peculiar to be explained as "natural" in their contexts or as spontaneously originated parallel phenomena.

With regard to the Geirrøðr myth and Þórsdrápa, this would mean that the myth as a whole is based on a foreign original which has been adapted to Scandinavian mythology. Furthermore, this would mean that the rowan as Þórr's special tree and "Þórr's wife" (a concept which also occurs in Finnish and Lappish tradition — see below) is based on a motif of the novelle and thus has only secondarily been connected with Þórr. The

<sup>12</sup> CARNEY, *Studies in Irish Literature and History* p. 7.

<sup>13</sup> This is a motif which is too vague to be of any importance for the comparison.



earlier presence of TBF in Ireland indicates that it cannot here be a question of a loan from Scandinavia to Ireland. Carney has assigned TBF to the Eighth Century, i.e. approximately contemporary with Beowulf, and has also drawn attention to features common to the two. Furthermore *Vita Columbae* from the Seventh Century is one of the sources of TBF.

Þórsdrápa which is said to date from the Eleventh Century<sup>14</sup> and which has had other earlier variants (cf. p. 65) does not, in spite of its dating from a relatively early period, give the heathen picture of Þórr. The influence of the Christian and classically educated Western Europe becomes evident here, as in the Þjazi-Iðunn myth which has been treated above.

### *The Rowan — the Rescue of Þórr*

In *Aus dem Gebiet der Lehnbeziehungen*, a work concerned with the problems of the borrowings and/or the ancient heritage in culture, Setälä has discussed the Finnish information about Rauni (the Rowan), Ukko's (Þórr's) wife, and has shown that it is a question of a loan from Scandinavian tradition. In Agricola's enumeration of the heathen gods in the Finnish translation of the Psalms of 1551 (Quin Rauni Ukon Naini härskey, ialosti Wkoi Pohiasti pärskey, Se sis Annoi Ilman ia Wdhen Tulon. Setälä, op. cit. p. 199), Rauni, Ukko's wife is mentioned among the deities of Karelia. The translation is to be found in Petrus Bång's *Prisorum Sveo-Gothorum ecclesia*, 1675 p. 209: "När Ragnel Thorinnan begynte storliuda, bulra Thor och gaff nyt siuda." Setälä further quotes some Finnish magic charms in which Rauni is called upon under the names of Rauna (Raana), Raunikko, Rammikko.

Setälä quotes from J. Fellman from Lappish mythology (*An-teckningar under min vistelse i Lappmarken* 2 p. 147): "Ravdna, Ukko's weib, die kinderlose, die nie gebiert. Sie wird auch Akko genannt. Die vogelbeeren waren ihr geheiligt. Sie wuchsen auch gewöhnlich reichlich bei ihren grotten." From Swedish-Lappish he quotes Lindahl-Öhrling: raun, raudn, raudna=rönnbär (rowan

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<sup>14</sup> To the Ninth or Tenth Century according to LINDQUIST op. cit.

berry). Kreutzwald's reference to Rannj, Ukko's wife in Estonian tradition, brings Setälä back to Raunj, mentioned by Thomas Hiärn, who found the name in Sigfridus Aronus Forsius' Latin adaptation of Agricola's enumeration of the Karelian gods.<sup>15</sup>

"The rowan — the rescue of Þórr" is also referred to in Grettir's Saga 52,4 in a paraphrase of the name Þórbjörg: *tveggja handa hjálp Sifjar vers* (the rescue of the two hands of Sif's husband), this being an allusion to the rowan which enables the rescue of Þórr out of the Vimur river.

The delicate question: Has the Celtic literary tradition influenced that of Pre-Christian Scandinavia, or has the Scandinavian tradition influenced the Celtic literary tradition, has already been answered. (p. 73.) Considering the importance and international character of the Celtic tradition in the early Middle Ages, it seems likely that the references to the connection between Þórr and the rowan have been composed by Scandinavian mythographers on the basis of a literary Celtic or British tale and have secondarily been taken from the myth into the epic charms of popular tradition. The problem falls outside the scope of the real Loki investigation, but it seems to me to be of such great importance to both ethnological and religious historical research that I could not refrain from bringing it up in the hope that it will be elucidated by other scholars in a wider context.

### Summary

The material discovered concerning the Loki figure is extremely scanty: Loki was good at lying, and Loki is the one who tricks Þórr into going to Geirrøðr's house without weapons, though forced to do so according to Snorri. The cunning and craftiness are there already in the Celtic novelle — the pattern has only been adapted to the Scandinavian mythology, in which Loki takes the part of the cunning Ailill and Þórr that of Froech. Findabair's equivalent is Gríðr who gives weapons to the unarmed.

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<sup>15</sup> Cf. also KROHN, *Zur finnischen Mythologie* p. 40 ff. Concerning magic concepts in connection with the rowan, see FEILBERG, *Bidrag til en Ordbog, "rön"* p. 123 ff.

I have tried to show here that Þórsdrápa and the Geirrøðr myth go back to an Irish or British novelle which has been adapted to suit the Old Norse mythology. The rather unexpected motifs and situations of Þórr in the river, the friendly help of Gríðr by giving him weapon, the mentioning of the rowan tree etc., get their explanation when we hear how Froech is lured into the pond but is helped by his true-love who gives him a weapon, how the rowan tree is of special importance in the Celtic story as part of a coloristic motif. We should also notice that the javelin is thrown back by Froech just as Þórr throws back the red hot iron bar. The whole Irish novelle is slightly altered in order to suit the Old Norse mythological concepts of Þórr as the giant killer.

The small role that Loki plays in this story of foreign origin shows that there are no special traits which could be said to be authentic for the Loki figure.

## 8. THE ASKR AND EMBLA MYTH

The divine triad Óðinn, Lóðurr and Hœnir meet in verse 17 in the creation narrative of *Völuspá*. Out of two trees the gods create Askr and Embla — a man and a woman — and give them life.

In *Gylfaginning*, Chapter 9, the same story of creation is mentioned by Snorri, who calls the divine triad “the sons of Burr”. Since Lóðurr and Loki are considered by some scholars to be identical, this triad has been quoted as a proof that Loki is one of the major deities, the creators of Man. This type of myth cannot be said to show any constitutive traits applicable to Loki (Lóðurr), since it is a matter of a widespread myth — a fact already pointed out by other scholars — associated in a secondary manner with this triad as borne out by *Völuspá*, verse 17. One of the many variations of the creation of man is that of the person created from a tree.<sup>1</sup>

This creation story is unusual inasmuch as we have three creators instead of the more usual single divine entity. In this the myth resembles Hygin's fable 220<sup>2</sup>: Sorrow creates a man out of river mud. Jupiter gives life to the man and afterwards Sorrow, Jupiter and the Earth contend as to which of them shall name the created being. Saturn decrees that the man throughout his life will belong to Sorrow who created him, his body will belong to Jupiter who gave it life and spirit, but the Earth will give him the name homo (ex humo), since the man was created from the soil.

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<sup>1</sup> THOMPSON, *Motif-Index* A 1251. The man created out of earth or clay, *ib.* A 1241. Cf. FRAZER, *Folk-Lore in the Old Testament* 1 p. 3 ff. Created out of a tree, A 1251 (1252. 1). Cf. *Hdwb. d. A.* 1 461, 955.

<sup>2</sup> BP 3 p. 54 note 1.

A parallel to this myth is to be found in a special type of tale,<sup>3</sup> known by the name of The Four Skilfull Brothers — Aa 653. In the Mongolian version of Vikramacarita there is a story about four shepherds. The first carves a female figure of wood, the second paints it, the third improves it, the fourth endows it with a soul. All four dispute as to whom she shall belong. She shall belong to the fourth. For the first is to be compared to her father, the second to her mother, the third to her spiritual teachers, the fourth, who endows her with a soul, is her spouse.<sup>4</sup>

In the Oriental tale of The Four Skilfull Brothers it is not the *creation* of the woman that is of interest but the *presentation of the problem*: Who has made the most important contribution? Interest in a problem or an intricate question and an ingenious solution or a wise answer is typical of Oriental fiction, and finds its main expression above all in the Eastern parable tales.<sup>5</sup> A more common variation than the creation motif in type Aa 653 is that the woman is delivered from captivity, or saved from death by four accomplished brothers or friends. And the problem is: who has made the most important contribution and to whom shall she belong?

The same question appears again in Prato's Fifteenth Century novel "Il Paradiso degli Alberti".<sup>6</sup> Here we have a narrative of four Etruscan youths who discover, while riding, a sparrow which has nearly been drowned as a result of getting entangled in a prickly bush beside a pond. Laerte perceives the danger that besets the sparrow and Celio saves it. Settimio reminds them of the sparrow when, on reaching home, they had forgotten it. Resio gives it seeds to eat from a bow of Melittis. The sparrow then recovers its true shape — it is a Princess Melissa, who has been bewitched by Circe. Now all four wish to marry Melissa. They turn to Jupiter and the gods debate the matter but cannot reach agree-

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<sup>3</sup> V. D. LEYEN, Das Märchen in den Göttersagen der Edda p. 123. DE VRIES, The Problem of Loki p. 34.

<sup>4</sup> BP 3 p. 53.

<sup>5</sup> Concerning the specifically Oriental types of fiction — the Semitic novelles and parable tales — see V. SYDOW, Våra folksagor p. 14 ff. and Kategorien der Prosa-Volksdichtung.

<sup>6</sup> BP 3 p. 46 note 1.

ment. Then Venus and Minerva propose that Melissa herself should decide which of them she wants to have.

The narrative of Askr and Embla in *Völuspá* must be seen against this background of international narrative material concerning the creation of Man. The plot or the order of events is the primary feature — the figures who play the parts, secondary and varying in relation to cultural regions and religions. In myths and tales the parts can be given to various gods as well as to profane and mythological characters. One cannot therefore assume *a priori* that the gods — Óðinn, Hœnir, Lóðurr — show from their roles at the creation any constitutive characteristics since the roles are identical in both mythological and profane fiction.

## 9. LOKI IN THE ÚTGARÐR MYTH

The Útgarðr myth told by Snorri in Gylfaginning, Chapters 45—47, is of no greater importance to this investigation as Loki is only mentioned en passant as the companion of Þórr, and as that companion who has to take part in the eating contest on the occasion of the visit to Útgarðaloki. Besides in the literature concerning Loki the Útgarðr myth has been investigated by Bugge, v. d. Leyen and v. Sydow.<sup>1</sup> The latter has studied the material with regard to its three main elements: 1. The slaughter of Þórr's billy-goats, 2. The Skrímir episode, 3. The Útgarðr episode.

1. *The Slaughter of Þórr's Billy-goats.* Þórr and Loki spend the night in a farm. Þórr slaughters his billy-goats to provide a meal. The farmer's son Þjalfi damages a bone to get at the marrow and when Þórr brings the billy-goats back to life again one of them is lame. Þórr gets furious and the farmer has to give both his children to Þórr.

The same story is known in Mediaeval legends and popular, later tradition. v. Sydow is of the opinion that the tale has come to Scandinavia from the Celtic tradition. The story is told by Nennius<sup>2</sup> and was also known in Persia in the Thirteenth Century and also in later Jewish, Arabic<sup>3</sup> and Armenian<sup>4</sup> tradition.

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<sup>1</sup> BUGGE, Norsk Sagafortelling i Irland p. 182 ff. PBB 12 p. 59 ff. v. D. LEYEN, Das Märchen in den Göttersagen der Edda p. 40 ff. KROHN, Skandinavisk mytologi p. 207 ff. v. SYDOW, Tors färd till Utgård. PIPPING, Den fornsvenska litteraturen p. 105.

<sup>2</sup> NENNIUS p. 56.

<sup>3</sup> BASSET, Contes et Légendes des Arabes p. 439 n. 1 ff., ib. Un recueil des contes de l'Australasie p. 2.

<sup>4</sup> WIKANDER, Tors bockar och patriarkernas kalv.

If Loki has played any part in this myth — which is not evident from Snorri's story but possibly from Hymiskviða verse 37 — it can here be of interest to ascertain that it is a question of a well-known legend and therefore it can not be used to show any constitutive Loki traits.

2. *The Skrímir Episode*. This does not contain any references to Loki and is of no importance in this context. The motifs which occur in the Skrímir episode are of the same kind as those which usually occur in tales of giants and of which Höttges has quoted some examples.<sup>5</sup>

3. *The Visit to Útgarðr*. This is an allegorical tale which shows affinity to the Irish tradition of Finn. In the Útgarðr myth Þórr and his men have to compete against invincible adversaries in all sports. Loki cannot eat as fast as Logi (the Fire), Þjalfi cannot run as fast as Hugin (the Thought) Þórr cannot beat the old woman Ella (Old Age) at wrestling, neither can he lift the cat (the Midgard serpent) entirely from the ground, nor empty the drinking horn (because its other end was in the ocean). In the Irish tradition Finn comes to a strange farm where he meets both Youth and Old Age personified and wrestles against animals which are symbols of the World.

The allegorical representations at Útgarðr are only known in Scandinavia in Snorri's literary story, while they are well-known in the later Irish tradition of Finn. Christiansen is of the opinion that it must have deep roots in Irish tradition because of its popularity there, even if no earlier recordings of the myth have been found.<sup>6</sup>

### Útgarðaloki

In Saxo the diffuse history of ancient times goes on through a closer, supposedly historical, tradition to end up with the history of the contemporary time. It is the same time perspective as is

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<sup>5</sup> HÖTTGES, Die Sage vom Riesenspielzeug; ib. Typenverzeichnis der deutschen Riesen- und riesischen Teufelssagen.

<sup>6</sup> CHRISTIANSEN, Til spørgsmålet om forholdet mellem irsk og nordisk tradition p. 31 ff.



found with other early chronicles. The space perspective is represented by Saxo in a similar way: The mythical geography begins where the known world ends. The mysterious and dark land of Útgarðaloki is thus supposed to be situated at the far corner of the Earth. It is identical with Hell, whence Thorkillus and his men return to the world of light and human beings to land in due course in Germany! There Thorkillus is converted to Christianity and from there he goes back to Denmark. Saxo here wants to show the contrast between the senseless beliefs of the heathens and Christianity and he also wants to expose the ignorance, stupidity and human degradation of heathendom.

In Snorri Útgarðaloki is a giant who is visited by Þórr and Loki. According to Saxo who nowhere mentions the name *Loki* in *Gesta Danorum*, *Útgarðaloki* is the fettered *devil* or the idol that men have worshipped in their folly. Thus, in Saxo *Útgarðaloki* is identical both with the fettered *Loki* as he is represented in Snorri's Baldr Myth and the concluding prose passage of *Lokasenna*, and with the fettered *devil* of the Mediaeval tradition.

Saxo's Útgarðaloki unites in his name the concept of the bound Loki with the Christian concept of the fettered devil<sup>7</sup> who is awaiting the end of the world (see p. 84), a motif which is also known in the Classical Prometheus tradition.<sup>8</sup> This gives us an opportunity to dwell for a moment on the motif of the fettered devil and its possible influence on the Loki figure.

### *The Fettered Devil*

The motif of the fettered Loki has been given special attention by Krohn in *Der gefangene Unhold*<sup>9</sup> and by v. d. Leyen in *Der gefesselte Unhold*<sup>10</sup> and it occupies a dominating place in Olrik's book *Ragnarokforestillingernes udspring*.

This motif had, however, already earlier been discussed on account of the reputed representation on the Gosforth Cross.

<sup>7</sup> ISA. 24,21 ff., and REV. 19.19—21, 20.1—3, 7—11. Cf. LINDBLOM, *Boken om Job och hans lidande* p. 19 ff.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. OLRİK, *Om Ragnarök* 2 p. 107 ff.

<sup>9</sup> FUF 7, 1907.

<sup>10</sup> *Prager deutsche Studien* 8, 1908.

George Stephens<sup>11</sup> was of the opinion that it is the bound Loki who was depicted on the Gosforth Cross and he brought forward some additional pictorial material including a fragment of a cross from Westmorland and some descriptions in the so-called Caedmon manuscript. Stephens expressed the view that the heathen motif of the bound Loki was the original one and that this motif had subsequently been taken over and identified with the Christian concept of the Devil. Stephens also quoted some sayings alluding to the concept of the release of the fettered devil at the end of the world: "Fanden er Løs eller Lænken for lang" alternately with the Danish and Norwegian saying "Fanden er løs" and the Swedish "Fan är lös". Stephens also quotes a phrase from Sir Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe*: "Take heed of yourself for the devil is unchained", a saying which, according to Stephens, has similar variants in England.

Stephens wants, however, to interpret these sayings as being originally based on a heathen saying which should have been: "Loki is loose" and thus alluding to Scandinavian heathen mythology. Even if Stephens' interpretation of the material cannot be accepted, his learned account is of the very greatest value. The identification of the fettered man's figure on the Gosforth Cross with Loki was supported by another scene on the Gosforth Cross which, according to him, represents Þórr catching the Midgard serpent.

Kaarle Krohn turned against these interpretations of the representations on the Gosforth Cross in his investigations.<sup>12</sup> He was, like Bugge earlier on, of the opinion that it was a question of Christian motifs. The bound Loki was a representation of the

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<sup>11</sup> STEPHENS, Prof. S. Bugges *Studier over Nordisk Mythologi*, gives references to literature and art.

<sup>12</sup> KROHN, *Skandinavisk mytologi* p. 157. Thus, for example, Krohn claims in *op. cit.* p. 7 that *ags. middan-eard(-geard)* corresponds to the Latin *mediae terrae* and *Miðgarðr* is according to Krohn the middle world where the human race lives. The serpent that is curled up round *Miðgarðr* is in his opinion Leviathan: "Like the Midgardserpent, Leviathan is described by the Anglo-Saxon writer Bede in the Eighth Century as surrounding the earth and biting its own tail. Thor's capture and subduing of the Midgardserpent is explained by the Mediaeval concept that God or Christ caught Leviathan (the Devil) on a fish hook (the Cross)."

fettered devil and Þórr's fishing expedition represents Our Lord catching Leviathan. These pictorial representations are found on the cross together with a Christian symbolic picture of Christ as *the hart* trampling or crushing *the serpent* which seems to indicate that the choice of motifs was based entirely on Christian tradition. The pictorial material presented by Stephens from the Christian Caedmon manuscript which depicts apocryphal scenes from Genesis concerning the rebellion of Lucifer or Satan, the expulsion and putting in chains in the abyss, is contemporary with the Gosforth Cross. The manuscript as well as the cross are usually dated to the Eleventh Century. The story of Lucifer's *fall* and *putting in chains* is a motif which was very popular in Christian literature during the Middle Ages. It was used already by Avitus in his *Poemata*<sup>13</sup> in which is told a story of the lost Paradise. His Angelus becomes Hostis or Draco or Serpens who comes out of the abyss in the form of a draco to tempt Eva.

We also encounter a representation of the bound devil being thrown into hell together with the fettered Arius and Judas in the Office of the Cross and Trinity dating from the beginning of the Eleventh Century.<sup>14</sup> The motif of the fettered devil also occurs in *Saltair na Rann* and *Lebor Gabála Éirenn*.<sup>15</sup>

Of interest in this connection is also the presence of this motif in Classical literature. Hesiodos and Apollodoros use the motif of the fettered Titans in the abyss, the *expelled* progeny of Uranos, see p. 165. The *fettered* giant or devil thus is found both in Classical and Christian tradition in connection with the motif of *fall* into the abyss. To my knowledge there is no motif in Greek tradition

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<sup>13</sup> AVITUS, *De Peccato originali* (ed. Moltheri.) p. 18. The discussion concerning MILTON's *Paradise Lost* and its possible connection with the Caedmon manuscript, (Junius XI in the Bodleian Library), can hardly be solved without a comparison with the corresponding tradition in Avitus, op. cit. GORDON, who in his *Anglo-Saxon Poetry* praises the description of Satan and his speech as something unique in contemporary literature, has evidently not been aware of the importance of Avitus' work. Neither has Gollancz discussed any other possibility than that the Caedmon Manuscript was the inspiration of Milton's poem.

<sup>14</sup> *The Palaeographical Society*. Facsimiles of Manuscripts and Inscriptions. Ser. 1, vol. 3, pl. 60.

<sup>15</sup> *Lebor Gabála Éirenn* 1 p. 19. Cf. also the *Book of Enoch* chapter 10.

concerning the release of the fettered Titans at the time of a future end of the world. The Greek motifs could, however be interpreted to indicate that the end of the world has already taken place to give room for a new cosmic system: 1. the overthrow of Uranos and the release of the Titans; 2. the re-fettering of the Titans during the new era which begins with the ascendancy of Chronos and Zeus.

It is however an interesting fact that also in Mohammedan tradition we encounter the motif of the bound Dahhāk and his release at the end of the world.<sup>16</sup>

### Christian Influences in *Völuspá*

The bound Loki is found in connection with the concept of the end of the world and the release of Loki — a combination which suggests a connection with Christian tradition. The world cataclysm constitutes a large portion of *Völuspá* and it seems justifiable that we should investigate this destruction of the world in which Loki plays a part.

The Christian influence on *Völuspá* has been stressed already by Olrik who pointed out that a large number of the motifs in the description of Ragnarök have their roots in Christian concepts: the release of Loki and the wolf, the arrival of the Muspell people, the destruction of the human race, the blast from the Giallarhorn, the whole world on fire, the extinguishing of the planets and, finally, the arrival of the Judge and the Kingdom of Eternal Peace. The Christian influence thus asserts itself in a large part of the Ragnarök narrative and one is reminded of the Book of Revelation with its fettered devil, host of released demons, the sound of the last trumpet and the world cataclysm.<sup>17</sup> The sixth and seventh episodes of *Völuspá* ought, however, to be seen against the background of other Christian Mediaeval works describing the

<sup>16</sup> CARNOY, *Iranian Mythology* p. 327.

<sup>17</sup> OLRİK, *Om Ragnarök* pp. 274 ff., 283 ff., 289 ff. It ought to be stressed that the motifs which are referred to by Olrik as heathen Celtic really belong to the Celtic literature of Christian times and thus they cannot therefore simply be regarded as heathen.

end of the world such as the Old High German poem *Muspilli* from the Ninth Century and the Irish work about the Destruction of *Dá Derga's Hostel*. There are similarities between both these works and the sixth and seventh episodes of *Völuspá*. Thus, for example, in *Völuspá*, is mentioned the *Gjallarhorn* and *Heimdallr* blowing his horn. The motif is repeated in the trumps of doom in the Revelation and also in *Muspilli*, verse 73,<sup>18</sup> is mentioned the heavenly horn. It is interesting to note that also in *Völuspá* the word *Muspell* is used, i.e. the same word as *Muspilli*. The literal and generally accepted translation of *Muspilli* is the *destruction of the earth* but other interpretations also exist. This translation of the word agrees with the context, i.e. "the destruction of the world" in *Völuspá* and in Snorri's *Baldr* myth. The word *Muspell* has no exact meaning in Old Norse literature,<sup>19</sup> but it seems to refer to a mythical place from which the destruction will come at the end of the world<sup>20</sup> (Lindquist). This implies that the word was borrowed with the Christian poem but was misunderstood by the new audience or mythographer.

In *Völuspá* verse 50 there is a description of the great serpent of the world who writhes in anger and lashes the waves at the end of the world. The same parable is found in the Irish work concerning the Destruction of *Dá Derga's Hostel*.<sup>21</sup> In this work there is an allusion to *Leviathan who surrounds the Earth and tries to upset it with his tail*. Stokes points out that

<sup>18</sup> V. STEINMEYER, *Die kleineren althochdeutschen Sprachdenkmäler*, *Muspilli* p. 70.

<sup>19</sup> BOSTOCK, *A Handbook on Old High German Literature* p. 121 about *Muspilli* and also "mudspelles" (line 2591) and *Mutspelli* (line 4358) in *Heliand*, according to Bostock in the sense of a destructive force.

<sup>20</sup> BOSTOCK, *op. cit.* p. 121 ff. BAESECKE, *Muspilli* 2 p. 222 ff. BRAUNE, *Muspilli* p. 440 ff. interprets the word as heathen and referring to certain heathen concepts. See also BAESECKE in *Muspilli* p. 422. Cf. also the articles by IVAR LINDQUIST and ERIK ROTH about *Muspell* and *Muspilli* in *SU* 20. For the Christian background of *Muspilli* cf. EHRISMANN, *Die althochdeutsche Literatur* p. 147 ff.

<sup>21</sup> *Leviathan* as the Midgard serpent, see STOKES, *The Destruction of Dá Derga's Hostel*. Cf. also *RC* 21, p. 54. This motif is not to be confused with the sea-monster foreboding tempests or disasters, cf. STOKES, *The Bodleian Amra Choluimb Chille*, p. 257.

the Midhgardhsormr is the world-serpent whose coils gird round the whole Midhgardh. In old Icelandic translations of legends Leviathan is rendered by Midhgardhsormr, (Cleasby-Vigfusson).<sup>22</sup>

Dillon who has also commented on this passage in the Destruction of Dá Derga's Hostel quotes an example from Pseudo-Bede from the Ninth Century. *De mundi constitutione liber*: "Alii dicunt Leviathan animal terram complecti, tenetque caudem in ore suo" and also another quotation about the serpent that encircles the world in the Coptic gnostic work, *Pistis Sophia*.<sup>23</sup>

Dillon means that this motif was borrowed by the Irish from a mediaeval Latin text and may have passed from Ireland to Norway.

The immediate source may be the Pseudo-Bede quoted above, but the remoter source appears to be rabbinical. Rashi, the famous commentator on the Bible, says that Leviathan is coiled around the earth (see Max Grünbaum, *Gesammelte Aufsätze* p. 129).<sup>24</sup>

Another example of the fettered enemy of the world who is let loose at the end of the world is found in the Rennes Dindsenchas:

Hence is *Loch Bél Dracon* "the lake of the Dragon's mouth", to wit, a dragon of fire which Ternóc's fostermother found there in a salmon's shape, and Fursa drove it into the lake. And that is the dragon which is prophesied to arise on St. John's day at the end of the world and afflict Ireland in vengeance for St. John the Baptist. And thence are *Crota Cliách* in Munster.<sup>25</sup>

This explanation is the answer to the question about how "Crota Cliách" got its name. The Rennes Dindsenchas is a collection of stories in Middle-Irish prose and verse about Irish names of mountains, lakes, rivers, cairns, and other noteworthy place-names. The Dindsenchas in the library of Rennes is written in the 14th or 15th century according to Stokes, but the collection may have been made in the 11th or the first half of the 12th.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>22</sup> STOKES, The destruction of Dá Derga's Hostel p. 54 note 14. Cf. above KROHN, *Skandinavisk mytologi* p. 7.

<sup>23</sup> *Die Pistis Sophia* p. 209.

<sup>24</sup> DILLON, *Early Irish Literature* p. 29.

<sup>25</sup> STOKES, *The Prose Tales in the Rennes Dindsenchas* p. 441.

<sup>26</sup> *ib.* p. 272.

This "catechism arrangement" in questions and answers is interesting and not dissimilar of the arrangement in *Gylfaginning* in the *Snorri Edda*, as, for example, in Gangleri's questions and Hár's answers or the answers given in *Skáldskaparmál* to the questions about the kennings concerned with different things and persons. *Hvernig skal kenna Vind?* . . . *Hvi er gull kallat haddr Sifjar?* . . . etc. In *Dindsenchas* the answers are given in prose alternating with verse as is also the case in *Skáldskaparmál*.

A similar pedagogical method is used in *Lucidarius*: after the questions of the student follow the answers of the teacher and thus the lore is passed on to the reader or listener.<sup>27</sup>

I have here quoted some examples of the fettered enemy of the world and the concept of this enemy as a sea-monster, a serpent who is surrounding the world like the Midgard serpent.

The examples may seem unimportant in this work about Loki. I thought it necessary, however, to stress that not only the Book of Revelation can have been of importance to the inspiration of the motif of the bound Loki and the description of Ragnarøk in *Völuspá* but that a literary influence from other Mediaeval texts concerning the fettered devil and the end of the world must be taken into consideration.

### **Influence from Classical Tradition?**

The above investigation ought to explain the motif of the bound Loki as a borrowing from the Christian tradition of the fettered devil. However tempting it would be to regard this as the only interpretation, there remain some motifs of which Christian tradition, as we know it, can hardly provide an explanation. These are the motifs of the *venom dripping snake* and *Loki who* writhes when the bowl is full and the venom falls on him and thus *causes the earth to shake*. At present I am not aware of any motifs corresponding to these in Christian tradition and, therefore, I find it difficult not to take into account the similar motifs in the Clas-

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<sup>27</sup> This pedagogical method is used already in very early Christian literature, as for instance in *Pistis Sophia* (where Mary's questions make Peter complain that the woman talks or asks too much!).

sical Prometheus myth: the eagle who pecks at Prometheus' liver and Prometheus who writhes with pain so that the world quakes. The animal who torments the prisoner and thus causes the earthquake occurs thus in both Classical and Scandinavian tradition. The treatment of these motifs in Scandinavian tradition has been explained by Olrik as merely incidental and natural in their setting. The snake should therefore be regarded as one of the usual snakes in descriptions of Hell and the earth-quake was added without design. These motifs in the narratives of Snorri and *Völuspá* can, however, have been welded together by an editor familiar with the Classical tradition of the bound Prometheus as well as with the Christian narratives of the fettered Devil.



## 10. THE BALDR MYTH

### Text

The Baldr myth from Snorra Edda Ch. 49—50, ed. Anne Holtsmark and Jón Helgason pp. 62—68:

49. Þá mælti Gangleri: „Hafa nokkvor meiri tíðindi orðit með ásunum? Al(1)mikit þrekvirki vann Þórr í þessi ferð.“

Hár svarar: „Vera mun at segia frá þeim tíðindum er meira þótti vert ásunum. En þat er upphaf þessarar sögu, at Baldr enn  
5 góða dreymsði drauma stóra ok hættliga um líf sitt. En er hann sagði ásunum draumana, þá báru þeir saman ráð sín, ok var þat gert at beiða griða Baldri fyrir allzkonar háska. Ok Frigg tók swardaga til þess at eira skyldu Baldri elldr ok vatn, iárn ok allzkonar málmr, steinar, iorðin, viðirnir, sóttirnar, dýrin, fuglar-  
10 nir, eitr, ormar. En er þetta var gert ok vitat, þá var þat skemtun Baldrs ok ásanna at hann skyldi standa upp á þingum, en allir aðrir skyldu sumir skióta á hann, sumir hoggva til, sumir beria grióti. En hvat sem at var gert, sakaði hann ekki, ok þótti þetta öllum mikill frami.

15 En er þetta sá Loki Laufeyjar son, þá líkaði honum illa er Baldr sakaði ekki. Hann gekk til Fensalar til Friggjar ok brá sér í konu líki. Þá spyrr Frigg ef sú kona vissi hvat æsir hefðu at á þinginu. Hon sagði at allir skutu at Baldri ok þat at hann sakaði ekki. Þá mælti Frigg: „Eigi munu vápn eða viðir granda Baldri, eiða hefi ek þegit af öllum þeim.“ Þá spyrr konan: „Hafa allir hlutir eiða unnit at eira Baldri?“ Þá svarar Frigg: „Vex viðarteinungr einn

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4 þessar] þeirar WT. 10 eitr ormar R (*oppfattet som kompositum?*), eitr-ormar U, eitrit, ormarnir WT. 11 standi skr. R. 20 þegit R, fengit WT, tekít U. hlutir]+þér WT.

fyrir vestan Valhøll. sá er mistilteinn kallaðr; sá þótti mér ungr at krefia eiðsins.“ Þvi næst hvarf konan á brut.

En Loki tók mistiltein ok sleit upp ok gekk til þings. En Høðr stóð útarlega í mannhringinum, þvíat hann var blindr. Þá mælti 25 Loki við hann: „Hví skýtr þú ekki at Baldri?“ Hann svarar: „Þvíat ek sé eigi hvar Baldr er, ok þat annat at ek em vápnlauss.“ Þá mælti Loki: „Gerþú þó í líking annarra manna ok veit Baldri sœmð sem aðrir menn; ek mun vísa þér til hvar hann stendr. Skiót at honum vendi þessum.“ Høðr tók mistiltein ok skaut at 30 Baldri at tilvísun Loka; flaug skotit í gognum hann, ok fell hann dauðr til iarðar. Ok hefir þat mest óhapp verit unnit með goðum ok mǫnnum.

Þá er Baldr var fallinn, þá felluz ǫllum ásum orðtøk ok svá hendr at taka til hans, ok sá hverr til annars ok vóro allir með 35 einum hug til þess er unnit hafði verkit. En engi mátti hefna, þa var svá mikill griðastaðr. En þá er æsirnir freistuðu at mæla, þá var hitt þó fyrr at grátrinn kom upp, svá at engi mátti ǫðrum segia með orðunum frá sínum harmi. En Óðinn bar þei(m) mun verst þenna skaða, sem hann kunni mesta skyn hversu mikil aftaka ok 40 missa ásunum var í fráfalli Baldrs.

En er goðin vitkuðuz, þá mælti Frigg ok spurði hverr sá væri með ásum er eignaz vildi allar ástir hennar ok hylli, ok vili hann ríða á Helveg ok freista ef hann fái fundit Baldr ok bióða Heliu útlausn, ef hon vill láta fara Baldr heim í Ásgarð. En sá er 45 nef(n)dr Hermóðr en hvati, sonr Óðins, er til þeirar farar varð. Þá var tekinn Sleipnir, hestr Óðins, ok leiddr fram, ok steig Hermóðr á þann hest ok hleypti braut.

En æsirnir tóku lík Baldrs ok fluttu til sævar. Hringhorni hét skip Baldrs, hann var allra skipa mestr, hann vildu goðin fram 50 setia ok gera þar á bálfor Baldrs. En skipit gekk hvergi fram. Þá var sent í Iqtunheima eptir gýgi þeirri er Hyrrokkin hét, en er hon kom ok reið vargi ok hafði hoggorm at taumum, þá hlióp hon af hestinum, en Óðinn kallaði til berserki .iiii. at gæta hestzins ok fengu þeir eigi haldit nema þeir feldi hann. Þá gekk Hyrrokkin á 55

22 mistils- *skr. R.* 32 verit unnit] gort verit *WT.* 39 þeim mun *W*, þeimun *R*, því *T.* 42 guðin *WT.* 43 hennar] mínar *WT.* 46 sonr *T*, son *WU*, sveinn *R.* er *WT*, en *R.* farar] sendifarar *WT.* 52 hét] er nefnd *WT.*

framstafn nokkvans ok hratt fram í fyrsta viðbragði. svá at eldr hraut ór hlunnunum ok lönd ǫll skulfu. Þá varð Þórr reiðr ok greip hamarinn ok myndi þá brióta hǫfut hennar, áðr en goðin ǫll báðu henne friðar.

- 60 Þá var borit út á skipit lík Baldrs, ok er þat sá kona hans Nanna Nepsdóttir, þá sprakk hon a(f) harmi ok dó; var hon borin á bálit ok slegit í eldi. Þá stóð Þórr at ok vígði bálit með Miðluni, en fyrir fótum hans rann dvergr nokkurr, sá er Litr nefndr, en Þórr spyrndi fœti sínum á hann ok hratt honum í eldinn, ok brann
- 65 hann.

- At þessi brennu sótti margskonar þjóð. Fyrst at segia frá Óðni. at með honum fór Frigg ok valkyriur ok hrafnar hans. En Freyr ók í kerru með gelti þeim er Gullinbursti heitir eða Slíðrugtanni. En Heimdallr reið hesti þeim er Gulltoppr heitir, en Freyia (ók)
- 70 kǫttum sínum. Þar kœmr ok mikit fólk hrímpursa ok bergrisar. Óðinn lagði á bálit gullhring þann er Draupnir heitir, honum fylgði síðan sú náttúra at hina níundu hveria nótt drupu af honom .viii. gullhringar iafnhǫfgir. Hestr Baldrs var leiddr á bálit með ǫllu reiði.

- 75 En þat er at segia frá Hermóði at hann reið níu nætr dökkva dala ok diúpa, svá at hann sá ekki fyrr en hann kom til árinna Giallar, ok reið á Giallarbrúna. Hon er þókt lýsigulli. Móðguðr er nefnd mæ'r sú er gætir brúarinnar; hon spurði hann at nafni eða ætt ok sagði at hinn fyrra dag riðu um brúna .v. fylki dauðra
- 80 manna — „en eigi dynr brúin *minnr* undir einum þér, ok eigi hefir þú lit dauðra manna. Hví ríðr þú hér á Helveg?“ Hann svarar at „ek skal ríða til Heljar at leita Baldrs. Eða hvárt hefir þú nakkvat sét Baldr á Helvegi?“ En hon sagði at Baldr hafði þar riðit um Giallarbrú, „en niðr ok norðr liggr Helvegr“.

- 85 Þá reið Hermóðr þar til er hann kom at Helgrindum; þá sté hann af hestinum ok gyrði hann fast, steig upp ok keyrði hann sporum, en hestrinn hlióp svá hart ok ifir grindina at hann kom hvergi nær. Þá reið Hermóðr heim til hallarinnar ok steig af hesti,

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61 af WT, a R. 63 hans] honum WT. 64 fœti sínum WT, fœtum R. 66 At WT, Enn R. 68 Slíðrug-] Sligru- U. 69 ók TU, ÷ RW. 70 -risar RT, -risa W. 71 Draupnir T. 77 Maudgaudr skr. T. 80 minnr W, miðr U, iafnmiðr RT. 86 ok] ÷ WT. 88 hesti] baki W, ÷ T.

gekk inn í hqllina, sá þar sitia í qndugi Balldr bróður sinn, ok dvalðiz Hermóðr þar um nóttina. En at morni þá beiddiz Her- 90 móðr af Heliu at Baldr skyldi ríða heim með honum, ok sagði hversu mikill grátr var með ásum. En Hel sagði at þat skyldi svá reyna hvárt Baldr var svá ástsæll sem sagt er, ok „ef allir hlutir í heiminum, kykvir ok dauðir, gráta hann, þá skal hann fara til ása aptr, en haldaz með Heliu ef nakkvarr mælir við eða vill eigi 95 gráta.“ Þá stóð Hermóðr upp, en Baldr leiðir hann út ór hqllinni ok tók hringinn Draupni ok sendi Óðni til minia, en Nanna sendi Frigg ripti ok enn fleiri giafar, Fullo fingrgull. Þá reið Hermóðr aptr leið sína ok kom í Ásgarð ok sagði qll tíðindi þau er hann hafð(i) sét ok heyrtr. 100

Því næst sendu æsir um allan heim ørindreka at biðia at Balldr væri grátinn ór Heliu. En allir gerðu þat, menninir ok kykvendin ok iorðin ok steinarnir ok tré ok allr málmr, svá sem þú munt sét hafa at þessir hlutir gráta þá er þeir koma ór frosti ok í hita. Þá er sendimenn fóru heim ok hqfðu vel rekit sín ørindi, finna þeir 105 í helli nqkkvorum hvar gýgr sat, hon nefndiz Þokk. Þeir biðia hana gráta Baldr ór Heliu. Hon segir:

„Þokk mun gráta  
þurru tárur  
Baldrs bálfarar;  
kyks né dauðs  
nautka ek karls sonar,  
haldi Hel því er hefir. 110

En þess geta menn at þar hafi verit Loki Laufeyjar son, er flest hefir illt gert með ásum.“ . . . 115

50. Þá mælti Gangleri: „Allmiklu kom Loki á leið er hann olli fyrst því er Baldr var veginn, ok svá því er hann varð eigi leystur frá Heliu. Eða hvárt varð honum þessa nakkvat hefnt?“

Hár segir: „Goldit var honum þetta svá at hann mun lengi ken- naz. Þá er guðin vóro orðin honum svá reið sem vón var, hlióp 120 hann á braut ok fal sik á fialli nqkkvoru, gerði þar hús ok .iiii. dyrr at hann mátti síá ór húsinu í allar áttir. En opt um daga brá

106 hon] sú WT. 106, 108 Þokk] Þavkt U (av=ø). 112 karls sonar WT, kalldsonar R. 113 haldi WTU, hafi R. 121 á (2) WTU, í R.

- hann sér í lax líki, ok falz þá þar sem heitir Fránangrsfors. Þá hugsaði hann fyrir sér hveria væl æsir myndu til finna at taka  
 125 hann í forsinum. En er hann sat í húsinu, tók hann língarn ok reið á ræxna, svá sem net er síðan (gert), en eldr brann firir honum. Þá sá hann at æsir áttu skamt til hans, ok hafði Óðinn sét ór Hliðskiálfinni hvar hann var. Hann hlióp þegar upp ok út í ána, ok kastaði netinu fram á eldinn.
- 130 En er æsir kómu til hússins, þá gekk sá fyrst inn er allra var vitraztr, er Kvasir hét; ok er hann sá á eldin(um) folskann er netit hafði brunnit, þá skilði hann at þat myndi væl vera til at taka fiska, ok sagði ásunum. Því næst tóko þeir ok gerðu sér net eptir því sem þeir sá á folska at Loki hafði gert. Ok er búit var  
 135 netit, þá fara æsir til árinna ok kasta neti í forsinn, hellt Þórr qðrum *netzhálsi* ok qðrum heldu allir æsir, ok drógu netit. En Loki fór fyrir ok legz niðr í milli steina tveggja. Drógu þeir netit ifir hann ok kenndu at kykt var firir, ok fara í annat sinn upp til forsins ok kasta út netinu ok binda við svá þungt at eigi skyli  
 140 undir mega fara. Ferr þá Loki fyrir netinu, en er hann sér at skamt var til sævar, þá hleypr hann upp ifir þinulinn ok rennir upp í forsinn. Nú sá æsirnir hvar hann fór; fara enn upp til forsins ok skipta liðinu í tvá staði, en Þórr veðr þá eptir miðri ánni. ok fara svá (út) til sævar. En er Loki sér tvá kosti, var þat lífs háski  
 145 at hlaupa á sæinn, en hitt var annarr at hlaupa enn ifir netit, ok þat gerði hann, hlióp sem snaraz ifir netþinulinn. Þórr greip eptir honum ok tók um hann ok rendi hann í hendi honum svá at staðar nam hōndin við sporðinn, ok er firir þá sōk laxinn aptr-miōr.
- 150 Nú var Loki tekinn griðalaus ok farit með hann í helli nōk-kvorn. Þá tóku þeir .iii. hellur ok settu à egg ok lusto rauf á hellunni hverri. Þá vóro teknir synir Loka. Vali ok Nari eða Narfe; brugðu æsir Vala í vargs líki ok reif hann í [sundr] Narfa, bróður sinn. Þá tóku æsir þarma hans ok bundu Loka með yfir

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123 Fránangrs *RW*, Franangs *U*, Farangrs *T*. 131 hét] er nefndr *WT*.  
 134 folskanum *WTU*. 136 qðrum *netzhálsi WTU*, enda qðrum *R*. ok (1)] en  
*WTU*. 145 hitt] hinn *WT*. hlaupa] leita *WT*. 148 nam *WTU*, naf *R*. sōk]  
 +síðan *WT*. 152 eða Narfe] ÷ *U*. 153 Nara *U*.

þá .iii. [egg]steina, ⟨stendr⟩ einn undir herðum, annarr undir len- 155  
dum, .iii. undir knésbótum, ok urðu þau bænd at iárni. Þá tók  
Skaði eitrom ok festi upp ifir hann svá at eitrit skyldi driúpa  
ór orminum í andlit honum. En Sigyn kona hans stendr hiá ho-  
num ok heldr mundlaugu undir eitrdropa, en þá er full er munn-  
laugin, þá gengr hon ok slær út eitrinu. En meðan drýpr eitrit í 160  
andlit honum: þá kippiz hann svá hart við at iqrð ǫll skelfr. Þat  
kallið þér landskiálpta. Þat liggr hann í bændum til ragnarøks.“

155 [egg]steina] eggsteina *U*, egg (!) *W*, hellusteina *T* (og fortsetter: Egg  
stendr ein . . . ǫnnur . . .). stendr *WT*, stóð *U*, ÷ *R*. 156 -botum *WTU*,  
-fotum *R*. 158 Sigyn *U*, Sigin *T*. stendr] sitr *WT*, + þar *T*. 159 mǫnd- *R*,  
munn- *W*, mun- *TU*.

### Survey of the Motifs in the Baldr Myth

<i>Gylfaginning</i>	<i>Völuspá</i>	<i>Baldr's draumar</i>
1. Bad dream The Asa gods debate They make Freyja take an oath from all living things not to harm Baldr The Asa gods shoot at Baldr	Prophecy cf. verses 23—26.  The mistletoe grows fair and slender high above the plains  With an arrow made from the tree that see- med only a sprig, Høðr shot his brother Baldr  Óðinn's night-old son avenges Baldr and car- ries Høðr to the pyre	Bad dream The Asa gods debate Óðinn goes to Hel to ask a dead seeress about Baldr's fate  The seeress prophesies: Høðr is to be Baldr's slayer  The seeress prophesies: Óðinn's night-old son by Rind is to avenge Baldr and put his foe on the pyre
The Asa gods despair. Cannot seek vengeance as they are in a sanctuary Hermóðr rides on Sleipnir to Hel to release Baldr		
3. Baldr is placed in a ship and cremated on a pyre		

*Gylfaginning**Völuspá**Baldr's draumar*

Nanna dies and is placed  
on the pyre. The proces-  
sion of the Asa gods

4. Hermóðr's journey to Hel.  
The promise that Baldr  
may return if everyone  
and everything mourns for  
him

Everyone weeps over Baldr  
except Þökk (Loki)

Verses 36—39 describe  
the journey to Hel

Cf. verses 3—4 with Snor-  
ri's account of the jour-  
ney. Preparations in Hel  
for the expected Baldr

*Lokasenna. Prose parts*

- 5a. The gods enraged at Lo-  
ki's deed. He hides in a  
house looking in all direc-  
tions. He often takes the  
form of a salmon in the  
river

The gods find Loki. He  
throws the net that he has  
made into the fire and  
jumps into the river

Qwasir understands that  
the burned net must be an  
invention to catch fish

The Asa gods make a net  
and catch Loki with it

The gods angry with Loki  
because he has slain the  
servant of Aegir and abused  
the gods. Loki hides in the  
river in the guise of a sal-  
mon

The Asa gods catch Loki  
in the river

- 5b. Loki is chained to three  
rocks with his son's en-  
trails

Sigyn collects the venom  
dropping from the snake

Loki causes earthquakes

Loki fettered until Ragna-  
røk

The chains are made  
from Váli's entrails,  
Loki chained

Sorrowful Sigyn sits  
with her husband

Cf. verses 47, 51

Loki is chained with Na-  
ri's entrails and Narvi is  
made into a wolf

Sigyn collects the venom  
dropping from the snake

Loki causes earthquakes

### The Motifs in Saxo's Narrative of Baldr and Høðr

Saxo's long, elaborate heroic epos is here given in a shortened version with the motifs that have a counterpart — or could conceivably have one — in the Baldr and Loki tradition in italics.

Høðr (Hotherus), skilled in sport and music, loves his foster sister Nanna. Baldr (Balderus), the son of Óðinn sees Nanna in the bath and falls in love with her.

While hunting Hqðr gets lost. He meets some wood maidens who give him advice of how to be successful in the contest. They tell him about Baldr and warn him to fight Baldr who is a half-god.

Hqðr proposes to Nanna. Gevar (Gevarus), Nanna's father, advises him to go North with reindeer and fetch *the sword of Mimingus, the only thing that could hurt Baldr*. Hqðr fetches the sword and an armlet.

Baldr is rejected by Nanna. Hqðr fights a sea-fight against Baldr, who is supported by Óðinn, Þórr and all the other gods. But Hqðr succeeds in knocking off the handle of Þórr's hammer — then the gods fled with Baldr.

*A large funeral pyre is made from Baldr's ship* and on it are burned the Saxon king Geld and his dead warriors.

Hqðr marries Nanna and Baldr is laughed to scorn because of his flight. But Baldr returns and conquers Hqðr who then has to flee to Gevar. After the victory Baldr digs wells in order to get water for his men, and the names of these wells still exist.

During the night Baldr is plagued by dreams of Nanna, until, finally he becomes so sick and weak that he has to go round in a carriage.

When Hqðr has gone home to Sweden, Baldr comes with his fleet and takes over rule in Denmark.

In despair Hqðr goes away and in the wilderness he meets the same woodmaidens as once before. They tell him that the victory would be his if he can only get some of the food that gives Baldr his strength. Hqðr then fights Baldr and during the combat he finds a house with three maidens who are preparing Baldr's food of snake venom. Hqðr says that he is a harper — he plays to them, and in return he is allowed to taste the food — in spite of the fact that the oldest maiden says that it is disloyal to Baldr. Hqðr also gets a victory belt.

During the continued fight between Hqðr and Baldr, Baldr is fatally wounded, but in spite of this he allows himself to be carried round the battlefield. *During the night Hel appears to Baldr and after three days he dies. A large burial mound is built over him.* (A treasure digging tale is inserted in the story.)

*Óðinn visits a fortune telling Finn. He says that Óðinn is going to have a son by Rindr who is to kill Hqðr and avenge Baldr as the gods have decided.*

Óðinn tries to win Rindr dressed up in various guises. The third time he beats her with runes cut in a piece of bark, and Rindr becomes mad. Óðinn dressed up as a medical



woman gains entry into Rindr's room. Óðinn makes her pregnant with the son Bue.

Óðinn is exiled because he has made a spectacle of himself by dressing up as a woman and is not allowed back until he has spent a long period in exile.

Óðinn urges Bue to kill Hqðr. Hqðr calls his men to hold council and tells them that the soothsayer has said that he is to fall in battle against Bue, and that his son Rörik is to succeed him as king. Bue slays Hqðr and dies himself the following days from his wounds.<sup>1</sup>

### Notes on the Motifs in the Baldr Myth

de Vries' view that the "evil Loki" is a secondary phase in the development of the original trickster figure has not been left uncontested. In his work on Loki,<sup>2</sup> Hermann Schneider has stressed Loki's rôle as the very principle of evil. Like Ström, Schneider interprets the narratives of the evil Loki as being constitutive of the Loki figure, and points out that the representation of the evil Loki is found already in the earliest sources.

de Vries holds the view that the trickster figure is the original one. The conception of Loki as an evil being must consequently be a secondary development. Olrik also came to the same conclusion in his latest work on Loki.

Before committing ourselves to any of these different theories, we must investigate the Loki myths in connection with the death of Baldr<sup>3</sup> as regards the question: What is general myth material, what can be myths or motifs constitutive of the Loki figure?

The Baldr myth is not a consummate composition. The story of Baldr's death, Loki's punishment, and Baldr's pyre is a *conglomerate of several different episodes* which have been welded together into a greater epic composition. Snorri's Baldr myth can be broken up in the following parts:

<sup>1</sup> Extract from Saxo p. 63 ff.

<sup>2</sup> ARW 35.

<sup>3</sup> Excluding the general works on Mythology, the Baldr myth has been dealt with in detail by DETTER, *Der Baldrmythus*. FRAZER, *Baldr the Beautiful* 1—2. KAUFFMANN, *Balder*. NECKEL, *Die Überlieferungen vom Gotte Balder* (reviewed by OLSEN, *Balder-digtning og Balderkultus*). MUCH, *Balder*.

1. Baldr dreams that he is going to die. The gods take council and make Frigg take an oath from all things that none of them will hurt Baldr. The gods therefore amuse themselves by shooting at Baldr, throwing stones at him, etc., as none of these things can wound him.

2. Loki dressed as a woman is told by Frigg what can hurt Baldr. Only the mistletoe — too young and too unimportant — has been overlooked. It has not taken an oath and is thus the only thing which can hurt Baldr. Baldr is killed by the blind Höðr through Loki's treachery with the mistletoe.

3. Baldr's funeral.

4. The journey of Hermóðr to the underworld to fetch Baldr. The dead can be restored on condition that all living things weep for him. Only Þökk does not weep.

5. Loki is punished and fettered on the cliffs under a viper dripping venom. Sigyn collects the venom, but when she has to empty the bowl Loki writhes in agony, so that the world shakes.

Snorri's Baldr myth is characterized by an epic technique, which belongs to the *written literary tradition* and which is essentially different from the oral epic tradition. The epic narrative of the oral tradition is based on an introduction which explains the subsequent course of events. The narrative consists of events in a direct and chronological order. Only a couple of characters appear simultaneously. The course of events of the narrative does not permit two parallel actions with digressions to simultaneous happenings or to divers characters as principal figures. In Snorri the myth gives an account of Baldr's pyre and the assembly of the Asa gods, simultaneously as the narrative announces that Hermóðr is on the road to Hel. After the incident of Baldr's pyre, the narrative connects again to Hermóðr's journey to Hel and the meeting with Baldr and describes what has happened during this period to Hermóðr. This parallelism in the course of events is contrary to the characteristic of the oral, popular art of story telling, which shows that this myth is a literary rearrangement which is dependent on the *written* epic art of narration, which *permits glimpses into the future, digressions, and glances into the past.*

Neckel has divided the Baldr myth into three acts and has emphasized the changing of the main characters in the different acts of the drama:

Es ist ja eigentlich Baldr allein, der durch alle drei Akte des Dramas hindurchgeht. Und er ist nicht einmal der Hauptträger der Handlung. Im ersten Akt ist dies Loki, dessen Gegenspielerin ist Frigg, ausserdem haben Höd und Odin Rollen. Die Hauptperson des zweiten Aktes ist Thor, neben ihm treten die ebenfalls neuen Gestalten der Nanna, der Hyrrokkin, des Litr auf; die Asen, die in I als Gesamtheit stumm agierten, haben hier Statistenrollen mit individuellen Masken; als Masse, als Chor gleichsam, erscheinen Berserker, Walkyrjen und Riesen. Im dritten Akt treten neu auf Hermod, der Held dieses Aktes, und Hel, dazu kommen Baldr und Nanna und in neuer Gestalt, Loki.<sup>4</sup>

This changing of actors round the figure of Baldr also shows that this is a question of a literary rearrangement. The oral popular narrative art in its representations has only *two* characters who appear simultaneously.<sup>5</sup> Other characters who appear simultaneously are only accessories and of no importance.

In Snorri's myth of Baldr *parts 1* and *2* consist partly of a variation of a special story-type Aa 931, the Oedipus tale, although without the motif of incest, partly of motifs from the story of the Christian Passion. *Part 3* is, as Neckel has already asserted, not an epic narrative but a description of a procession and devoid of events.

*Part 4* is a variation of the journey to the other world or the story of Orpheus.

*Part 5* contains a. *a myth explaining the origin or invention of the net,*

b. *the cosmological myth of the bound giant or devil.*

The different sections of the Baldr myth have quite different sets of characters. Thus Loki appears only in *parts 2* and *5* — and possibly in *4* as Þökk. In *parts 1* and *3* Loki is not mentioned at all.

<sup>4</sup> NECKEL, Die Überlieferungen vom Gotte Balder p. 21.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. OLRİK, Episke love i folkedigtningen p. 77 and Folkedigtningens episke love p. 550.

*Parts 1—2 of the Baldr Myth. Motifs from the Story  
of the Christian Passion*

In part 1 nothing is said about the means of achieving invulnerability. According to "the epic laws" of the oral tradition, the omission of the mistletoe should have been mentioned in the account of the taking of the oath. Or, in the search for the instrument of vulnerability it ought to have been made obvious that only the mistletoe could wound him. This *glance into the past* as to what had happened at the taking of the oath — the omission of the mistletoe — shows that we are dealing here with the literary tradition.

The oath administered to all things appears only in Snorri's version. Only there do we meet the unique motif: Frigg administers the oath to all things that they will not hurt Baldr. The closest parallel is the Jewish myth of the cabbage stalk, as preserved in Toledóth Jeschu:

Als nun die Weisen befohlen hatten, dass man ihn an das holtz hencken solte und das holtz ihn nicht tragen wolte, sondern unter ihm zerbrach, sahen es seine Jünger, weineten und sprachen: sehet die gerechtigkeit unseres Herren Jesu, dass ihn kein holtz tragen will; sie wussten aber nicht, dass er alles holtz zu der zeit beschworen hatte, alss er den Nahmen noch in handen hatte; denn er wusste sein urtheil wol, dass er zum hangen würde verdammet werden . . . Da aber Judas sahe, dass kein holtz ihn tragen wolte, sagte er zu den Weisen: betrachtet die arglistigkeit des gemüths dieses Huhrensohnes, denn er hat alles holtz beschworen, dass es ihn nicht tragen solte; siehe es ist in meinem garten ein grosser krautstengel, ich will hingehen und selbigen herbringen, vielleicht wird er ihn tragen. Die Weisen aber sprachen: gehe hin, mache es wie Du gesagt hast. Da lieff Judas hin und brachte den krautstengel und sie henckten Jesum daran.<sup>6</sup>

In another version of Toledóth Jeschu we read:<sup>7</sup>

Jesus wusste, dass ihm ein Erwürgungstod komme; darum, als er noch die Schrift des erklärten Namens hatte, beschwor er *alle Bäume der Welt*, sowohl die fruchtbringenden als die

<sup>6</sup> V. D. LEYEN, Das Märchen in den Göttersagen der Edda pp. 23—24.

<sup>7</sup> DÄHNHARDT, pp. 209—210. Cf. ib. pp. 207, 232 popular tales of this type. KROHN, Lemminkäinen's tod < Christi > Balders tod, pp. 114, 118.

nicht fruchtbringenden, dass sie *ihn nicht aufnehmen* möchten. Wie aber die Jünger sahen, dass er in der Hand der Ältesten ist, zauberten sie zu seiner Rettung, aber sie vermochten nichts. Das war am Rüsttage des Sabbats, und an dem Tage fasteten die Leute und gingen traurig einher, und die Weisen sagten, ihn gleich zu hängen, um zu erfüllen, was da steht: "Du sollst wegschaffen das Böse aus deiner Mitte." Sie nahmen ihn, banden ihn an Händen und Füßen, brachten ihn auf einen Baum, *aber der Baum zerbrach sofort*, weil er unter dem Schwure stand; so machten es auch *alle Bäume*. Jesus sprach: "Ich weiss es, dass mich die Juden nicht lassen, bis sie mich töten." Alle Schüler sahen es und weinten und hofften, als sie sahen, dass die Hölzer unten zerbrachen und ihn nicht ertragen können, um so mehr irrten sie sich und glaubten an ihn und sagten, das geschehe infolge seine Würde. Es war aber dort ein Alter (=Judas), ein Haus und Garten; im Garten war ein Baum des Kohls — das ist kein eigentlicher Baum — höher als ein Palmenbaum; und da er von seinem Ahnen, der längst gestorben war, ein Testament hatte, in welchem geschrieben war, es werde ein Kampf entstehen für Israel infolge eines Bastards, und jener Bastard habe durch Erwürgung zu sterben, aber *die Bäume würden ihn nicht ertragen . . . da sagte jener alte und andere Alten: "Lasset ihn uns auf diesen Kohl hängen!" Und der Kohl nahm ihn auf*, denn er hatte nur die Bäume beschworen. Er blieb bis Abends hängen, und die Jünglinge und Frauen *warfen Stricke, Kot, Pfeile und Steine auf ihn*. Des Abends aber sandten die Weisen, ihn von dort herabzunehmen, und sie nahmen ihn herab, zu erfüllen, was da steht: "Seine Leiche bleibe nicht auf dem Holze," so taten sie auch und begruben ihn.

As Dähnhardt has observed, this is reminiscent of Baldr, who is exposed to blows and missiles.

A further similarity between Toledóth Jeschu and Snorri exists, namely: Þökk does not take part in the lamentation for Baldr just as Judas does not take part in the fasting and praying at the Resurrection of Our Lord.<sup>8</sup> *The taking of the oath, Baldr as target, and the refusal to weep for Baldr*: these three motifs in Snorri possess a form which suggests an *apocryphal mediaeval legend*

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<sup>8</sup> DÄHNHARDT, *Natursagen* p. 213. EISENMENGER, *Entdecktes Judenthum* p. 192. Cf. also v. D. LEYEN, *Das Märchen in den Göttersagen der Edda* p. 25. BUGGE, *Studier* 1 p. 39.

as the source. These are motifs which can scarcely have been obtained from popular oral tradition but rather from literary and clerical tradition.

The influence of the Christian story of the Passion in the Baldr myth has sometimes been over-emphasized, when Baldr is conceived as a kind of White Christ. One must remember that these *motifs from the story of the Passion* are not to be found in the other Old Norse traditions of Baldr but *only in Snorri*.

Bugge has chosen to regard the motif of *the blind Hqðr* as identical with *the blind Longinus*<sup>9</sup> in the story of the Passion, and is of the opinion that this motif has been adopted by the myth of Baldr and has been transferred to the "evil" Loki. As is to be seen below "the blind slayer" does not only occur in the legends of the Passion but also in other contexts, as in British literary works which are closely related to the Old Norse tradition.

After this digression on the Story of the Passion in order to illustrate these motifs typical of Snorri we can return to the real Baldr myth.

#### THE MOTIF OF INVULNERABILITY

The motif — the gods use Baldr as a target — has been compared by v. d. Leyen with the Walhalla warriors who kill each other every day and come to life again immediately afterwards. The indestructibility and/or invulnerability is, however, a commonly used motif, both in tales and in superstitions.

There are four forms of the motif of invulnerability:

1. The hero is invulnerable except in one place.
2. The hero can only be killed in a particular situation.
3. The hero can only be killed by a certain instrument.
4. The hero can only be killed by a certain person.

"The Achilles heel" has its equivalents in, for example, a number of American Indian myths of the bear-man monster or the flintman monster, who has only one certain vulnerable spot which

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<sup>9</sup> To the conception of Longinus as blind Stephens strongly objects in his article in Aarbøger 1883 p. 261 ff.

the hero has to strike with his arrow. This is also the case in the story of Rustam, in which Isfendiar is vulnerable only in his eye and even then only by a certain weapon.

As example of the second form can be mentioned: The hero has to stand in his adversary's footprints or lift his adversary, who loses his power only when he is not touching the earth.

The third form of the motif of invulnerability is undoubtedly the most usual. This occurs not only in stories, tales and myths, but also possesses its counterpart in popular belief. Thus we meet the conception that certain animals could only be shot with the aid of a silver bullet or the Host; in the traditions of Charles XII, who was invulnerable and could be shot only with the aid of a button from his own greatcoat — to mention one or two different examples.

In some American Indian myths we have a counterpart to this motif of invulnerability. In the story of Ioskeha and Tawiscara (the Flintman), the good and the evil brother, it is related that the evil brother tries to ask the good one as to which weapon can hurt him, or asks what he is most afraid of. Ioskeha relates that he is most afraid of a certain plant — "Flagtail" — or feathers, things which are apparently quite harmless or innocent. In some of the variants this signifies that the good brother is only fooling the evil brother, in others the plant is conceived as identical with or possessing Ioskeha's own powers and therefore dangerous. The evil brother in turn reveals that he is only afraid of flint and with this is slain by Ioskeha.

A parallel to these myths from the North Eastern forest area is to be found in the following accounts of Ictinike or Ikto among the prairie Indians. An Indian succeeds in luring Ikto to say what he is most afraid of. Ikto relates in confidence that he is most afraid of crackling sounds and the Indian therefore sets fire to the prairie grass. Or he also says that he is afraid of rattles and unpleasant noises and the Indians terrify him by making a hideous din. These humorous narratives are variants of a special type. Aa 1145 The Ogre is Afraid of what Rustles and Rattles — belonging to the cycle of The Stupid Giant. In these variants the principal persons question one another as to what weapon is dangerous for them; subsequently there follows a struggle with

the only "possible" weapon, whereby the evil brother or the stupid devil is overcome.

In a special type of tale, Aa 302 The Giant without a Heart, the princess held captive by the giant finds out by sleight where the giant has his heart concealed. The giant's life or heart is connected to a certain object, which is well protected, but the hero succeeds in finding the object and destroying it so that the giant dies.

In another type of tale about The Faithless Wife (or Sister), Aa 590 (560), the hero's life is connected with a certain object and the false woman reveals this secret to her lover. The hero is slain but brought to life again by his faithful animals.

In tales or myths containing the motif of invulnerability, the hero has to find out secretly which weapon is the only possible one. Thus Rustam has to ask Simurg about what can kill Isfendiar, just as Loki has to ask Frigg what can kill Baldr and the princess has to ask the giant where his heart is hidden. Common to all these different types of tales is the *motif of invulnerability* only. Otherwise there is nothing common to these types of tales. The *order of events* is quite differently constructed in the different traditional types. The special theme of *death ordained by Fate* to which the Baldr myth and its motif of invulnerability belongs, is type Aa 931 — the Oedipus Tale or the King and his Prophesied Death.

This type can be said to contain the fourth special form of the motif of invulnerability. The hero can only be slain by a *particular* person. While the motif of invulnerability in the other types of tales is described with pleasure, in order to reveal how the difficulties are skilfully and cunningly overcome, in this last case of invulnerability there is incorporated a fatal tragedy. In his folly man tries to escape what Fate has prepared for him, and which has been revealed to him by means of a dream or a prophecy.

It has seemed to me necessary to explain the traditional place of the motif of invulnerability in various types of tales, because several scholars have observed the motif of invulnerability and have interpreted it as the uniting link between these different types. For this reason they have included in the discussion of the



Baldr myth types of tales such as Aa 302, 303, 315, 590 (560), which have nothing in common with the Baldr myth — except the motif of invulnerability.

When the connection between the Oriental motif of invulnerability and the Baldr myth was discussed by Kauffmann<sup>10</sup> and Neckel in the beginning of the Twentieth Century, this was quite in its place and an important contribution to the collection of relevant material. The summary of the forms of the international types of tales had not then been worked out and, consequently, there existed no possibility of classifying the material in detail. The works of Kauffmann and of Neckel have, naturally enough, proved the corner stones in research concerned with Baldr, which no one can fail to quote and take account of. But in the case of these and other earlier works one must classify as irrelevant and foreign all variants of types Aa 302, 303, 315, 590. 560.

*The Baldr Myth Parts 1—2 and Type Aa 931 or the Oedipus  
Tale in the Oriental Tradition*

The relationship of the Baldr myth to *oriental* tradition is genuine in the case of the narrative of Atys, which in its turn is related to the narratives of Adonis and Attis. For interpretations of Atys and Attis as fertility gods, see below.<sup>11</sup> Neckel has seized on the relationship to these myths and links them not only to the Baldr *myths* but also to a *cult of* Baldr in Scandinavia.<sup>12</sup> In Herodotos (I 34—35) the following narrative of Atys may be found:

The Lydian king Croesus had a dream that his son Atys would be slain by the thrust of a lance. Terrified by his dream, he sought to defend his son by ordering all the spears and lances to be collected from the dwellings of the men and piled in store-houses. Atys is not allowed to set out on war-like expeditions any more. To the court of Croesus there came a Phrygian exile, Adrestus (the name means the man whom one cannot escape), who had been driven away by his father after he had shot his brother by mistake. Croesus

<sup>10</sup> KAUFFMANN, Balder p. 136 ff.

<sup>11</sup> FRAZER, Adonis, Attis, Osiris. HEPDING, Attis.

<sup>12</sup> NECKEL, Die Überlieferungen p. 142 ff.

purified him and admitted him into his household. Simultaneously there appeared on the Mysian Olympus a huge wild boar which destroyed the fields of the Mysians, who were unable to slay the creature and begged Croesus for help. Croesus' son, who had heard their plea, wanted to hunt the beast but his father would not allow him to do so and related his dream and why he had sought so long to protect him. The youth replied, ". . . You tell me that the dream revealed that I should be slain by the thrust of a lance. But what has a wild boar by way of arms, and what kind of lance does it possess, that you need fear? Had the dream told that I should die of the bite of a tooth or suchlike, you should act as you are now acting, but this is the question of a lance. Since this battle is not one between men you can let me set forth." Croesus allowed himself to be persuaded by his son and sent Adrestus to watch over him. — When they surrounded the wild boar Adrestus aimed at the boar, missed and struck Atys. In his misery Adrestus begged to be sacrificed over the body of Atys, but Croesus had mercy on him and said, "All righteousness is fulfilled in you, since you have now condemned yourself to death. An it is not you who are to blame for this misfortune that has overtaken me, except that you, against your will, brought it upon me. But the blame must lie with some deity, who knew from the first what was to happen."<sup>13</sup>

This narrative has justly been compared with the Baldr myth,<sup>14</sup> as it is a variant of Aa 931, which is of Oriental origin like other narratives of "unavoidable destiny". The hunting of the wild boar, in the course of which Adrestus' unlucky shot kills Atys, corresponds to the ill-fated wild boar hunt undertaken by Attis and Adonis.<sup>15</sup> The motif on which this type is based has been referred by Thompson to Chapter N (Chance and Fate) in the Motif-Index under Number 334.1. This motif is followed by 334.2:

<sup>13</sup> Abridged from Lindskog's translation pp. 17—21.

<sup>14</sup> CONSTANS, *La Légende d'Œdipe dans l'Antiquité au moyen age et dans les temps modernes*. Cf. BIN GORION, *Der Born Judas* 1 pp. 165 ff., 372.

<sup>15</sup> FRAZER, *Adonis, Attis, Osiris* pp. 8, 164. Cf. also Peleus, who accidentally kills his father-in-law Eurytion on a wild boar hunt. See APOLLODORUS 2 p. 63 note 2. Cf. also, though more remotely, Aa 2401: The children play at Hogkilling. BP 1 p. 202 and WESSELSKI, *Überlieferungen aus der Zeit Mohammeds* p. 431.

*Hanging in game or jest accidentally proves fatal*, the same motif that we encounter in Vikar's tragic feigned sacrifice to Óðinn.<sup>16</sup>

In the theme of *the inevitability of fate* the natural introduction to the story, *fate* waiting for the hero, is provided by a *dream* or *prophecy*. The hero's kin try to ward off the fulfilment of the prophecy or the man who feels threatened seeks to escape his fate. All such efforts are in vain, as in the end, in spite of everything, the dream or prophecy is irrevocably fulfilled. There are many different types of this theme, for example Aa 461, 930, 931, 933. In this case the most pertinent is type Aa 931, the tale of Oedipus, without, however, the incest motif. The dream of Croesus as well as that of Baldr, the attempts to ward off what fate has in store and finally its fulfilment — sometimes in the form of an unlucky shot — are all motifs belonging to this type of story.

In the variants of "Oedipus" or "The King and his Prophesied Death", as it has also been called, the *prophecy as to the manner of death* has been formed in four different ways (cf. above p. 103): It is prophesied that a person is to die:

- a. by means of a certain person, for example a son, a grandson in the female line (Laius and Oedipus, Akrisius and Perseus, Balor and Lugh, Astyages and Cyrus);<sup>17</sup>
- b. by means of a certain instrument (a spearhead of iron, the tusk of a wild boar, an apparently harmless plant, a certain sword);
- c. in a certain predetermined situation, which would appear impossible or absurd) standing with one foot on a goat and the other on the beach, neither out nor in, etc. [Math vab Ma-

<sup>16</sup> The hanging motif in Motif-Index K 852 (Deceptive Game), which occurs in *Kathā Sarit Sāgara* 1 p. 157 is of another kind.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. GRUFFYDD, *Math vab Mathonwy*, p. 366 ff., who also refers to the stories of Pharaoh and Moses, Jesus and Herod. MURPHY, *The King and his Prophesied Death. Duanaire Finn* 3 pp. xlix, 4. CARNEY, *Studies* p. 236 ff. HARTLAND, *The Legend of Perseus* 1 p. 1 ff. Cf. also FLOWER, *Catalogue of Irish Manuscripts in the British Museum* 2 p. 538 and MACKINNON, *A Descriptive Catalogue of Gaelic Manuscripts* p. 194 ff. on the Tale of Oedipus in the Thebaid. For the dating of *le Roman de Thèbes* see also FRAPPIER, *Chrétien de Troyes* pp. 18, 36.

- thonwy], "until Great Birnam wood to high Dunsinane hill shall come" [Macbeth, see p. 127]);
- d. by attack directed against one particular vulnerable spot (the eye of Balor).

These different solutions of the hero's fate or the prophecy of death determine the form of the other events in the story. It is within this sphere of motifs that one finds the motif of the *fulfilment of fate*, when one brother kills another by *an unlucky shot*, just as Perseus, when throwing the discus, misses the target and kills his grandfather.

### Myth or Cult?

The problem is now, what relationship has the Scandinavian myth of Baldr's death to the European and Oriental tradition? Is it an Oriental, classical myth which has spread to Scandinavia or is it, as Neckel and Kauffmann have sought to prove, a Near Eastern fertility cult and attendant myth of cult which lie behind the myth of Baldr? The last question may seem irrelevant in that we possess no description of a cult of Baldr save the obscure reference to Baldr's grove in the Friðþjófr's saga. This tale seems to be a misinterpreted variant of The Prophesied Death of the King. Just as *Balor* keeps his *daughter locked up in a tower so that no man may meet her* and no son may be born to her, so King *Bele's daughter* lives in a sanctuary, a grove of Baldr, where *men and women are not allowed to meet*. Kauffman (p. 106 ff.) conceives the reference in the Friðþjófr's saga to be evidence of a cult of Baldr in Scandinavia. We cannot, however, assume that, even if a cult of Baldr did exist, it would necessarily be identical with the cults of the Near East. Kauffmann writes (p. 227):

Die von Hqðr verübte Tötung Balders ist nie anders als rituell gedeutet und wiederholt auf einen Jahresritus bezogen worden. Doch gehen in der näheren Bestimmung des der Dichtung zu Grunde liegenden Ritus die Hypothesen auseinander (o. s. 2 ff.).

Indem auch ich darauf ausgehe, den Mythos auf einen hinter ihm liegenden, mit dem alten Kultus in Zusammenhang stehenden Ritus zurückzuführen, knüpfe ich an die Ergebnisse an, die für die Wesenheit Balders bereits gewonnen ist.

Kauffmann and Neckel have been led to this conclusion by considering the *variants* of the narrative of Oedipus or The Prophesied Death as data of rites and cults.

*Narratives of a traditional type* must not be interpreted as genuine *reports on actual conditions*. We are concerned here with variants within the world of *fiction*, not with actual data from real life. This is one of the methodological questions dealt with in the chapter on myth and cult.

Thus there is no evidence to indicate any connections between the same *cult* in the Near Eastern and the Old Norse traditions. However, as regards the *myth* we find in the Mediaeval European tradition (cf. p. 130) a link uniting the Oriental and the Old Norse versions. It will be shown in the following that the Mediaeval British traditions are particularly close to the Old Norse ones, mainly because of the content of the story about Fergus' Death (Aided Fergusa) and the story about Balor's Death. There is, as we will see, an agreement in details between the Scandinavian and the British traditions of the Oedipus tale which indicates that the Baldr myth (Parts 1—2) has come to Scandinavia direct from, or has been influenced by the tradition found in, the British Isles.

### *Type 931 in the British Tradition*

The Scandinavian tradition of Baldr has also been compared by earlier scholars with the narrative in Beowulf of Hæðcyn and Herebeald.<sup>18</sup> Hæðcyn misses the target with his arrow and the unlucky shot kills his brother Herebeald. Neckel, p. 142, assumes that the incident in Beowulf is derived from a Southern Scandinavian heroic tale derived, in turn, from material found in the tale of Baldr.

Here, however, we shall examine further material which has not previously been discussed in Baldr-Loki research and which indicates that British material has provided the source of this part of the Scandinavian myth of Baldr or has at least affected the Scandinavian tradition. This is the Celtic material to be found

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<sup>18</sup> The first Swedish scholar who observed the Scandinavian and Anglo-Saxon tradition was Victor Rydberg, according to information I have received from Professor Ivar Lindquist. Cf. ANF 6 p. 112.

in Tom Peete Cross' Motif-Index of Early Irish Literature under N 337, *Accidental death through misdirected weapon*,<sup>19</sup> and N 337, 1. *Blind poet unintentionally kills friend*.<sup>20</sup> These motifs are treated by Carney in his published material on Táin Bó Fraich in *Studies in Irish Literature and History*.

The Celtic variants are of particular interest to the Old Norse myth of Baldr because they contain the motif of *the unlucky shot* and *the blind slayer* (javelin thrower) and the *lethal weapon made from a magic plant*.

Of the greatest interest to this investigation is the tale of the Death of Fergus (Aided Fergus) in which is told the motif of *the blind javelin thrower tricked into killing his foster brother* in the belief that playful animals, not human beings, are disporting themselves in the water. Thus Aillil, not Lugaid, is responsible for the slaying, just as Loki is *raedbana* and Hǫðr *daedbana*,<sup>21</sup> as will be seen from the story given here in Carney's version.

<sup>19</sup> *Longes Mac n-Uislenn*, The exile of the sons of Uisliu p. 65 and *Silva Gadelica* 2 p. 129. This story in *Silva Gadelica* contains the motif, the spear-head of holly, which can be said to correspond to the mistletoe. Cainen inquired of Caeilte ". . . And where was Ferchis Mac Comain the poet killed?" "It was the shot of a *hardened holly* javelin which on the top of Sliabh Crot Ael son of Dergdubh delivered at a stag, but with the same slew Ferchis unwittingly . . ." As I am placing this story in *Silva Gadelica* in connection with the Irish *Mirabilia* and the Norse *Speculum Regale* it is of interest to note that in all three versions we find the *enumeration of questions and answers*. (We meet here the same epic technique that occurs in *Gylfaginning*. Gangleri inquires of Hár how the world was created, about the Ása gods and the remarkable things in heaven, just as Patrick asks Caeilte to tell him of the deeds of the Fianna and orders them to be recorded. *The questions and answers* form the *frame* for the stories. Cf. p. 88 note 27. Cf. also Windisch, *Die altirische Heldensage Táin Bó Cúalnge nach dem Buch von Leinster* p. 406, *Der Fehlwurf von Bélach Eóin*, also in *IHK* pp. 184—185.

<sup>20</sup> *Todd Lecture Series* 14, p. 33 ff. The death of Fergus Mac Róich (*IHK* p. 575 Aided Fergus Mac Roig). The narrative of the Death of Fergus is treated by CARNEY in *Táin Bó Fraich*, *Studies in Irish History and Literature*. Of these literary references, Aided Fergus is of principal interest to this investigation.

<sup>21</sup> DE VRIES, *The Problem of Loki* p. 171 and *Altgermanische Religionsgeschichte* 2 p. 218, use the terms *ráðbani* and *handbani*. For the juridical meaning of the terms see WILDA, *Das Strafrecht der Germanen* pp. 599, 627—630. Cf. *Skáldskaparmál* 15 *ráðbani* Baldrs.

One day, having exercised their hounds, they were by the lake on Mag Aí. They had a large encampment, having games and gatherings there. One day the whole crowd went into the lake to bathe.

"Go down, Fergus," said Ailill, "and drown the men."

"They are not good in water," said Fergus. In spite of that he went down. Medb's heart could not bear his going into the lake. As Fergus entered the lake all the gravel and stones that were in the bottom of the lake came to the top. Then Medb went and was upon his breast, her legs entwined about him, and then he swam around the lake. And jealousy seized Ailill. Medb then came out.

"It is delightful, Lugaid, how the hart and doe disport themselves in the lake," said Ailill.

"Why not slay them?" said Lugaid. And he had never made an erring cast.

"Let you make a cast at them for us," said Ailill.

"Turn my face towards them, and give me a spear," said Lugaid.

Fergus was washing in the lake and his breast exposed. And Ailill's chariot was brought to him, and he came near him (Fergus). An Lugaid made a cast of the spear so that it went out through his back.

"The cast has gone home," said Lugaid.

"True," said the others, "to the breast of Fergus."

"Alas," said Lugaid, "that I have slain my foster-brother and companion, and he guiltless of any crime."

"Bring me my chariot," said Ailill. The whole crowd takes to flight, each man towards his own country, both the exiles and the Connachta.<sup>22</sup>

In this investigation we are concerned with the question, To what extent can Aided Fergus as quoted above and TBF<sup>23</sup> have served as sources for the Scandinavian tradition of the Death of Baldr?<sup>24</sup> We have already shown the importance of the latter for the *Þórsdrápa* and the *Geirrǫðr* myth (cf. p. 70).

<sup>22</sup> CARNEY, *Studies* p. 14. Cf. also IHK p. 575 ff.

<sup>23</sup> The relationship between the tale of the death of Fergus, *Vita Columbae* and the ring of Rhydderch and their importance for TBF has been demonstrated convincingly by CARNEY in his *Studies in Irish Literature and History* p. 47.

<sup>24</sup> After my lecture in Dublin in 1958 about the relationship between the Irish and the Old Norse myth, Professor J. Carney told me that he had noted the similarity although he had not commented upon it (CARNEY, *The*

In Snorri's myth Loki and Hqðr are introduced as strangers to one another, indicating that the mythographer could not refer to Hqðr's blindness as a fact well-known to his audience: Loki drew up the mistletoe by the roots and proceeded to the gathering. Hqðr, who was blind, was standing on the fringe of the group. Loki addressed him and inquired, "Why do you not shoot at Baldr?" "Partly", replied Hqðr, "Because I cannot see him and partly because I have no weapon." Then Loki said, "You should, like the others, contribute to Baldr's honour. I shall show you where he is standing and you can shoot at him with this stick." Hqðr took the mistletoe and shot at Baldr as Loki directed him. The mistletoe flew through Baldr's body and killed him. The conversation between Loki and Hqðr corresponds to the dialogue between the *jealous Ailill* and the *blind Lugaid*. Ailill succeeds in making the blind Lugaid believe that Medb and Froech are playful animals: "*It is delightful, Lugaid, how the hart and doe disport themselves in the lake*", said Ailill. "Why not slay them?" said Lugaid. And he had never made an erring cast. "*Let you make a cast at them for us*", said Ailill. "Turn my face towards them and give me a spear", said Lugaid . . . And Lugaid made a cast of the spear so that it went out through his (Fergus') back . . . In Aided Fergusa the motif of the *blind* javelin thrower has been used with skill, whereas in the Scandinavian tradition it gives the impression of having been clumsily combined with the *mistletoe* as the only effective weapon. In the Irish tradition the *blindness* is essential — only a blind man could be deceived into thinking that animals, not men, were playing in the pool.

In one version of the Irish tale of Fergus' Death a motif corresponding to the Mistletoe in the Baldr myth is found.<sup>25</sup> It is told in *Silva Gadelica* that Ferchis (Fergus) was killed by Ael (Ailill) by means of a spear of "*hardened holly*". He aimed at a stag and then unwittingly slew Ferchis the poet . . . Thus it is evident that *both* the motif of the magic plant as a lethal weapon and the motif of the blind slayer were known in the Irish versions of the Death of Fergus.

Ecclesiastic Background to Irish Saga p. 225 note 3). The same holds true for DE VRIES who has noted the likeness but not commented further upon it (*Altgermanische Religionsgeschichte* 2 p. 218 note 3).

<sup>25</sup> *Silva Gadelica* 2 p. 129. Cf. also p. 111 note 19, and p. 138.



Medb and Ailill are principal characters in the cycle of tales featuring Lugaid.<sup>26</sup> The name Lugaid for the blind javelin thrower has its counterpart in Lugneus — admittedly in a different capacity — in Vita Columbae. Lugneus appears in this case in the role of Fergus (Froech). Aided Fergusa agrees with Snorri with regard to the motif of the blind Lugaid who shoots his foster-brother, and with Saxo in Medb's and Fergus' bathing scene and the rivalry of Fergus and Ailill for Medb. In Saxo this has its equivalent in Nanna's bathing episode and the rivalry of Baldr and Hǫðr. Neckel suggests a connection between Nanna and Gerd, Baldr and Freyr and labels these narratives as loves stories (op. cit. p. 80 ff., 85 ff.), influenced by Celtic fiction; an example is the presentation of the hero as a harper. Neckel is of the opinion that Saxo introduced the motif of the bathing Nanna in order to explain the rivalry of Baldr and Hǫðr. The prototype of this motif in Saxo's narrative exists, however, already in Aided Fergusa, as shown above. Furthermore, one need not interpret with Neckel the motif of Hǫðr as harper as "a general Celtic motif". In this case it might be a particular motif, that of *the blind poet who involuntarily kills his friend*, which forms the basis of Saxo's harper Hǫðr and Snorri's blind Hǫðr. However, this is a point I don't want to stress.

### Lugh and Balor

The name Lugaid for the blind javelin thrower takes us to another group of narratives of Lugh and Balor, a combination of names to which Professor Nils Holmer first drew my attention. The narratives of Lugh and Balor's eye have been treated by A. H. Krappe<sup>27</sup> and D'Arbois de Jubainville.<sup>28</sup>

These narratives are variants of the Oedipus type, Aa 931. John O'Donovan, publisher of The Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland by the Four Masters, included in this work (pp. 18—21) a story which he wrote down in 1835 to the dictation of Shane O'Dugan, a member of the family of that name on Tory Island.

<sup>26</sup> For the names Lugaid, Lugneus, see also PLUMMER, Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae 2 p. 363.

<sup>27</sup> KRAPPE, Balor with the Evil Eye pp. 1—43 and detailed bibliography.

<sup>28</sup> DE JUBAINVILLE, The Irish Mythological Cycle.

"In days of yore (a period beyond the reach of chronology, — far back in the night of time) flourished three brothers, Gavida, Mac Samhthiann, and Mac Kineely the first of whom was a distinguished smith, who held his forge at Drumnatinne, a place in the parish of Rath-Finan, . . . Mac Kineely was lord of that district, comprising the parishes of Rath-Finan and Tullaghobegly, and was possessed of a cow called *Glas Gaivlen* [*rectè* *Glas Gaibhnenn*], which was so lactiferous as to be coveted by all his neighbours, and so many attempts had been made at stealing her, that he found it necessary to watch her constantly.

"At this same remote period flourished on Tory (an island lying in the ocean opposite Drumnatinne, which received that name from its presenting a towery appearance from the continent of Tir-Connell, and from the many prominent rocks thereon, towering into the heavens, and called *tors* by the natives) a famous warrior, by name Balor, who had one eye in the middle of his forehead, and another directly opposite it, in the back of his skull. This latter eye, by its foul, distorted glances, and its beams and dyes of venom, like that of the Basilisk, would strike people dead, and for that reason Balor kept it constantly covered, except whenever he wished to get the better of enemies by petrifying them with looks; and hence the Irish, to this day, call an evil or overlooking eye by the name of *Suil Bhaloir*. But, though possessed of such powers of self-defence, it appears that it had been revealed to a Druid that Balor should be killed by his own O, or grandson! At this time Balor had but an only child, a daughter, Ethnea by name, and seeing that she was the only medium through which his destruction could be wrought, he shut her up in an impregnable tower, which he himself, or some of his ancestors, had built some time before on the summit of Tor-more (a lofty and almost inaccessible rock, which, shooting into the blue sky, breaks the roaring waves and confronts the storms at the eastern extremity of Tory Island); and here he also placed a company of twelve matrons, to whom he gave the strictest charge not to allow any man near her, or give her an idea of the existence or nature of that sex. Here the fair Ethnea remained a long time imprisoned; and, though confined within the limits of a tower, tradition says that she expanded into bloom and beauty; and though her female attendants never expressed the sound *man* in her presence, still would she often question them about the manner in which she herself was brought into existence, and of the nature of the

beings that she saw passing up and down the sea in *cur-rachs*: often did she relate to them her dreams of other beings, and other places, and other enjoyments, which sported in her imagination while locked up in the arms of repose. But the matrons, faithful to their trust, never offered a single word in explanation of those mysteries which enchanted her imagination.

In the mean time, Balor, now secure in his existence, and regardless of the prediction of the Druid, continued his business of war and rapine. He achieved many a deed of fame; captured many a vessel; subdued and cast in chains many an adventurous band of sea rovers; and made many a descent upon the opposite continent, carrying with him, to the island, men and property. But his ambition could never be satiated until he should get possession of that most valuable cow, the Glas Gavlin, and to obtain her he, therefore, directed all his powers of strength and stratagem.

"One day Mac Kineely, the chief of the tract opposite the island, repaired to his brother's forge to get some swords made, and took with him the invaluable Glas Gavlin by a halter which he constantly held in his own hand by day, and by which she was tied and secured by night. When he arrived at the forge, he intrusted her to the care of his brother, Mac Samhthainn, who, it appears, was there too, on some business connected with war, and entered the forge himself, to see the sword properly shaped and steeled. But while he was within. Balor, assuming the form of a red-headed little boy, came to Mac Samhthainn and told him that he heard his two brothers (Gavida and Mac Kineely) saying, within at the furnace, that they would use all his (Mac Samthainn's) steel in making Mac Kineely's swords, and would make his of Iron. 'By the *Seomh*, then,' says Mac Samthainn, 'I'll let them know that I am not to be humbugged so easily; hold this cow, my red-headed little friend, and you will see how soon I'll make them alter their intention.' With that he rushed into the forge in a passion, and swearing by all the powers above and below, that he would make his two brothers pay for their dishonesty. Balor, as soon as he got the halter into his hand, carried off the *Glas*, with the rapidity of lightning, to Tory Island, and the place where he dragged her in by the tail is, to this day (a great memorial of the transaction), called Port-na-Glaise, or the harbour of the *Glas* or *green cow*. When Mac Kineely heard his brother's exclamations, he knew immediately that Balor had effected his purpose; so, running out of the forge,

he perceived Balor and the cow in the middle of the Sound of Tory! Mac Samhthainn, also, being soon made sensible of the scheme of Balor, suffered a few boxes on the head from his brother with impunity. Mac Kineely wandered about distracted for several hours, before he could be brought to a deliberate consideration of what was best to be done to recover the cow; but, after he had given full vent to his passions, he called to the lonely habitation of a hoary Druid, who lived not far from the place, and consulted him upon the matter. The Druid told him that the cow could never be recovered as long as Balor was living, for that, in order to keep her, he would never close the Basilisk eye, but petrify every man that should venture to get near her.

“Mac Kineely, however, had a Leanan-sidhe, or familiar sprite, called Biroge of the Mountain, who undertook to put him in the way of bringing about the destruction of Balor. After having dressed him in the clothes worn by ladies in that age, she wafted him, on the wings of the storm, across the Sound, to the airy top of Tormore, and there, knocking at the door of the tower, demanded admittance for a noble lady whom she rescued from the cruel hands of a tyrant who had attempted to carry her off, by force, from the protection of her people. The matrons, fearing to disoblige the Banshee, admitted both into the tower. As soon as the daughter of Balor beheld the noble lady thus introduced, she recognised a countenance like one of which she had frequently felt enamoured in her dreams, and tradition says that she immediately fell in love with her noble guest. Shortly after this, the Banshee, by her supernatural influence over human nature, laid the twelve matrons asleep; and Mac Kineely, having left the fair daughter of Balor pregnant, was invisibly carried back by his friendly sprite to Drumnatinne. When the matrons awoke they persuaded Ethnea that the appearance of Biroge and her protege was only a dream, but told her never to mention it to her father.

“Thus did matters remain until the daughter of Balor brought forth three sons at a birth, which, when Balor discovered, he immediately secured the offspring, and sent them, rolled up in a sheet (which was fastened with a *delg* or pin), to be cast into a certain whirlpool; but as they were carried across a small harbour, on the way to it, the *delg* fell out of the sheet, and one of the children dropped into the water, but the other two were secured and drowned in the intended whirlpool. The child that had fallen into the harbour, though he apparently sunk to the bottom, was invisibly

carried away by the Banshee who had cleared the way to his procreation, and the harbour is to this day called Port-a-deilg, or the Harbour of the Pin. The Banshee wafted the child (the first, it appears, of the three, who had seen the light of this world) across the Sound in safety to his father, who sent him to be fostered by his brother Gavida, who brought him up to his own trade, which then ranked among the learned professions, and was deemed of so much importance that *Brighit*, the goddess of the poets, thought it not beneath her dignity to preside over the smiths also.

“Balor, who now thought that he had again baffled the fates by drowning the three children, having learned from his Druid that Mac Kineely was the man who had made this great effort to set the wheel of his destiny in rapid motion, crossed the Sound, and landing on that part of the continent called (from some more modern occupier) Ballyconnell, with a band of his fierce associates, seized upon Mac Kineely, and, laying his head on a large white stone (one holding him upon it by the long hair, and others by the hands and legs) cut it off, clear, with one blow of his ponderous sword! The blood flowed around in warm floods, and penetrated the stone to its very centre. This stone, with its red veins, still tells this deed of blood, and gives name to a district comprehending two parishes. . . .

“Notwithstanding all these efforts of Balor to avert his destiny, the Banshee had executed the will of the fates. For after the decollation of Mac Kineely, Balor, now secure, as he thought, in his existence, and triumphant over the fates, frequented the continent without fear of opposition, and employed Gavida to make all his military weapons. But the heir of Mac Kineely, in course of time, grew up to be an able man, and, being an excellent smith, Balor, who knew nothing of his birth, became greatly attached to him. The heir of Mac Kineely, who was well aware of his fathers fate, and acquainted with the history of his own birth and escape from destruction, was observed to indulge in gloomy fits of despondency, and frequently to visit the blood-stained stone, and to return from it with a sullen brow which nothing could smooth. One day Balor came to the forge to get some spears made, and it happened that Gavida was from home upon some private business, so that all the work of that day was to be executed by his young foster-son. In the course of the day Balor happened to mention, with pride, his conquest of Mac Kineely, but to his own great misfortune, for the young smith watched his opportunity, and, taking a

glowing rod from the furnace, thrust it through the basilisk eye of Balor and out through the other side of his head, thus avenging the death of his father, slaying his grandfather, and executing the decree of Fate, which nothing can avert. '*Fatum regit homines.*'"

Some say that this took place at Knocknafola, or Bloodyforeland, but others, who place the scene of Balor's death at Drumnatinné, account for the name of Knocknafola, by making it the scene of a bloody battle between the Irish and Danes.

O'Donovan suggests in his preface to this story that Balor Beimeann still lived in tradition in various parts of Ireland, and that his name was used to frighten children. According to O'Donovan the tradition of Balor was preserved, above all, on Tory Island, but was also found on the coast of Donegal and in Mayo. Tom Peete Cross<sup>29</sup> gives an example of preserved tradition of Balor and his famous milking cow in *Béaloideas* 7 p. 244, which contains the motif *Balor's eye which turns to stone when the eyelid is raised*. In *Béaloideas* 6 p. 168 and 3 p. 128 there is an account of the remarkable cow Glas Goidhlinn or Ghlas Ghaibhleann, but these variants say nothing of Balor. In the former story, from Bantry Bay the cow is owned by a *famous smith*, just as in O'Donovan's story the cow is robbed from the brother of the *smith* Gavida.<sup>30</sup>

The numerous inconsistencies in the order of events of the tale show that two different stories have been welded together, partly Aa 931, partly a story about the stolen milking-cow or cattle. de Jubainville has observed several similarities to classical tradition, which can possibly have had some importance for the development of Irish tradition.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> See references in CROSS, Motif-Index of Early Irish Literature under M 341.2. *Prophecy: death by particular instrument*. M 341.2.0.1. — *by particular weapon*. M 343 *Parricide prophecy*. In spite of all attempts to thwart the fates the child kills his father. Cf. A 525.2. *Culture Hero (God) slays his grandfather*.

<sup>30</sup> With regard to the relationship of the name of the smith Gavida and gavagoba, see DE JUBAINVILLE op. cit. p. 122.

<sup>31</sup> DE JUBAINVILLE op. cit. p. 113.

The modern recording that particularly resembles that made by O'Donovan is Larminie's tale of the Gloss Gavlen.<sup>32</sup>

Balar Beimeann has stolen the milking-cow from Kian, who pursues him in order to regain possession of it. Kian is given employment by Balar. Balar had a daughter and it was foretold that she would give birth to a son who would slay his grandfather. His daughter was therefore locked up so that no man could approach her, and Balor himself waited on her with food. Her only companion was a dumb woman. Kian, who had received from Mananaun the ability to open all locks, visits Balar's daughter in secret and she finally gives birth to a son. With Mananaun's help Kian succeeds in making his escape from the place. Kian leaves his son in the care of Mananaun, who gives the son the name of Dul Dauna. One day Dul Dauna and his foster-father are out at sea when they catch sight of Balar Beimeann's fleet. Dul Dauna places a ring in his eye and sees his grandfather walking on the deck, but he does not know that it is his grandfather. He throws a javelin and it kills Balar. The prophecy has thus been fulfilled.

Larminie observes an interesting detail: Dul Dauna (Blind-Stubborn) is the counterpart of Lugh's surname Ildauna (of all arts and sciences) in the tale of the Second Battle of Moytura, in which a considerable part of the narrative is devoted to praising all the skills of Lugh. The name can perhaps also stand in some relationship to the *blind* slayer.

In addition to the narratives from later times referred above, variants of type Aa 931 can be found even in older material. Pokorny thus provides a variant taken from the Book of Leinster:<sup>33</sup>

It is foretold of Dáre that he will die when his daughter gives birth to a son. The daughter is placed under guard. Nevertheless she becomes pregnant by Mac ind Óc when she

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<sup>32</sup> LARMINIE, *West Irish Folk-Tales and Romances* p. 1. CURTIN has given two variants of this tale in *Hero-Tales of Ireland*. See also DELARGY on Curtin's variants in *Béaloideas* 2 p. 196 and 12 Appendix. Murphy states in *Duanaire Finn* 3 that many modern recordings of the tale are found in Irish Folklore Commission from different parts of Ireland.

<sup>33</sup> POKORNY, *Beiträge zur ältesten Geschichte Irlands* p. 332.

leaves the fortress in a drunken condition.<sup>34</sup> The druids keep her undelivered of her child for nine years — nine times nine months — when she is finally delivered. Dáre dies simultaneously. With long hair and a long beard, Nóine comes into the world.

Pokorny is of the opinion that this is the same story about the birth of Lugh as that recorded by O'Donovan in 1835.

A variant of type Aa 931 — in considerably altered form — may be found in *Longes Mac n-Uislenn* dating from the Twelfth Century (another given date is Eighth to Ninth Century).

The child screams in its mother's womb so loudly that it can be heard over a considerable area. People wonder what the cries can bode. A seer says that the maiden will give birth to the most beautiful girl, Derdriu, "A woman for whom there will be many slaughters Among the chariot-fighters of Ulster." The warriors wish the girl-child to be killed, but Conchobar says that he himself will raise her. "In a court apart it is that she was brought up in order that she should spend the night with Conchobar, and no person ever was allowed into that court except her foster father and her foster mother and Leborcham: for the last mentioned one could not be prevented, for she was a female satirist." Derdriu who had heard of Noisiu and his beauty leaves Conchobar and escapes with Noisiu and his brothers. During their exile in Scotland Noisiu is killed and Derdriu is handed over to Conchobar. The story continues with the narrative of the Princess Who Did not Laugh.

Carney has commented on this narrative<sup>35</sup> and compares it with the Icelandic saga of *Kormákr* and *Steingerd*.<sup>36</sup> In the Irish tale Cormac is mentioned only in passing whereas in the Icelandic tale he plays the part of Noisiu.

In the narrative referred to above prophecy occurs but in this case it concerns an unborn girl; she will be the cause of tragedies

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<sup>34</sup> This motif is reminiscent of Statius' narrative of Achilles winning Deidamia on the occasion of a Bacchic feast. Dressed as a woman, Achilles swings his *thyrsus*, the staff which, according to Bugge, has the power to enrage all present. BUGGE, *Studier* p. 134 note 1, compares the motif with Óðinn who drives Rind mad by touching her with a piece of bark inscribed with runes.

<sup>35</sup> CARNEY, *Studies* p. 234 ff.

<sup>36</sup> *ib.* p. 225.



by being desired by many men. Like Balar's daughter, she is locked up in a place to which only Chonchobar and his family can gain entry. The love story ends with Noisiu being slain by an unlucky shot. Otherwise the story has nothing in common with type Aa 931 — it is only these three episodes that suggest it is partly derived from the type mentioned.

In a manuscript dating according to Stokes from the Fifteenth Century, *The Second Battle of Moytura*, Part 8, it is related how Balor gave his daughter Ethne to Cian and how she became the mother of Lugh. In Part 133 we are told that Lugh and Balor meet in battle:

An evil eye had Balor. That eye was never opened save only on a battle-field. Four men used to lift up the lid of the eye with a polished(?) handle (which passed) through its lid. If an army looked at that eye, though they were many thousands in number they could not resist [a few] warriors. Hence had it that poisonous power. His father's druids were concocting charms. He came and looked over the window, and the fume of the concoction came under it, so that the poison of the concoction afterwards came on the eye that looked. Then he and Lugh meet.

134. "Lift up mine eyelid, my lad", says Balor, "that I may see the babbler who is conversing with me".

135. The lid is raised from Balor's eye. Then Lugh cast a sling-stone at him, which carried the eye through his head. And so it was his own army that looked (at it). And it fell on the host of the Fomorians, and thrice nine of them died beside it, so that the crowns of their heads came against the breast of Indech son of Dé Domnann, and a gush of blood sprang over his lips.<sup>37</sup>

Also in *Duanaire Finn* 1 p. 134 Song XV: 13—18), which is thought to date from the early Seventeenth Century, there occur, according to Murphy, traces of the King and his Prophesied Death, specifically in the naming of Finn.<sup>38</sup> Murphy also points out that in a text from the 12th century, *Fotha Catha Cnucha*, which has been inserted in *Leabhar na h-Uidhre*, Finn acquires

<sup>37</sup> STOKES, *The Second Battle of Moytura* p. 101.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. *Duanaire Finn* 3 p. xlix.

from his grandfather "his residence of Almha".<sup>39</sup> These traditions are interesting because they show affinity with the Welsh tradition, Math vab Mathonwy, and the modern Scottish Finn tradition.

Also in Song XVI: 10—13 of *Duanaire Finn* we find the story of Lugh killing Balor.<sup>40</sup>

. . . Twas Balor that besought Lugh a short time before his beheading: Set my head on thy own comely head and earn my blessing.

The triumph and the terror that the men of Inis Fail found in me well I wish that henceforth they may be found in my daughter's son.

That blessing nevertheless Lugh Longarm did not earn: he set the head above an eastern wave in a fork of hazel before his face.

A poisonous milk drips down out of that tree of strong hardness: through the drip of the bane of no slight stress, the tree splits in two.

In *Leabhar Gabhála*, The Book of Conquests, in a copy from 1630, there is told a variant of the Lugh—Balor motif in The Second Battle of Moytura.<sup>41</sup>

Nuada with the silver hand becomes heir to the throne instead of Breas and enters into an alliance with Lug Lamfada or Ildánach, brother of Dagda and Ogma. The three brothers and Goibniu, the smith, meet secretly every day for the period of one year. After that, Lugh goes to see three gods and spends seven years with them to prepare for the battle, i.e. the battle of Mag Tured (Moytura). Nuada is killed by Balor, who has an evil eye which is opened only during battle. It takes four men to lift the eyelid and those who are struck by the glance cannot fight the enemy. Lugh hits Balor's eye with a stone, driving it right through his head.<sup>42</sup>

The slaying of Lugh's father Cian is described in the tale of the Sons of Turen, *Oidhe Chloinne Tuireann*. This tale, which has been mentioned earlier in connection with the Þjazi myth and

<sup>39</sup> *ib.* p. xxxiv.

<sup>40</sup> *Duanaire Finn* 1 p. 135.

<sup>41</sup> STOKES, The Second Battle of Moytura.

<sup>42</sup> Narrative summarized according to GRUFFYDD, *Math vab Mathonwy* p. 76. Cf. the full account on p. 122. Cf. HYDE, *A literary History of Ireland* p. 285 ff.

the stealing of Iðunn's apples, (see p. 17) also contains a story about Balor.

One day when the king was holding a fair on Balor's hill, a host of men came there and among them a young man of such brilliant appearance that no one could bear to look at him. That was "Lugh of the long hand and the heavy blows". Lugh was riding Manannan's horse and carrying Manannan's weapons and he slew all the giants' envoys except nine, who were allowed to return to Lochlainn. When Balor heard of this he asked who the warrior was. His wife Ceithlionn answered: "He is *the son of your daughter* and mine, and *it is a sign that our power over Ireland is broken.*" Breas, son of Balor, offers to kill Lugh. The story continues with a narrative of the killing of Kian, Lugh's father, and the wergild that the sons of Turen have to pay.<sup>43</sup>

The prophecy or dream which reveals that the father or grandfather is to be slain or dethroned by his son or the son of his daughter, the daughter who is held captive so that the prophecy will not be fulfilled, are motifs belonging to type Aa 931, just as the motif of the hero or a god coming to the captive and making her pregnant, so that Fate is fulfilled in spite of everything. In a group of variants, as Krappe has shown, the hero is dressed as a woman in order that he may visit the captive. Undoubtedly Krappe is right when he compares this motif with Saxo's version, in which Óðinn dresses himself as a woman in order to come to Rind.<sup>44</sup> The motif of dressing as a woman occurs, certainly, in many different contexts, just as does the motif of invulnerability, without there being, on that account, any question of an association between the heterogeneous narratives. Here, however, the motif belongs to prophesied death, the captive daughter and the prophesied birth of the child. Thus Achilles is also dressed in female garb when he wins Deidemia, as she — like the daughter of Dáre — goes out in ecstasy.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Summarized according to Math vab Mathonwy p. 77.

<sup>44</sup> KRAPPE, Balor with the Evil Eye p. 12 not 42. This motif can be said to suit the concept of Óðinn's capacity in making "sejd". Cf. STRÖMBÄCK, Sejd p. 25 ff.

<sup>45</sup> It is interesting to note that Deidemia and Achilles dressed as a woman visit a cult place to which only women gain entry. Later Deidemia gives birth to the child who will avenge Achilles.

Óðinn dresses himself as a woman in order to gain entry to the mad Rind and make her pregnant. She gives birth to Bue, who becomes the avenger of Baldr as was prophesied. Also in *Völuspá* — see diagram p. 131 — reference is made to the birth of Óðinn's son who night-old will fulfill the prophecy of killing Hqðr and avenging Baldr. This form also occurs in Baldr's draumar, in which the seer prophesies that Rind will give birth to Váli, son of Óðinn, who will be the avenger of Baldr.

Saxo's version, like *Völuspá* and Baldr's draumar, shows that the Scandinavian tradition is based on the motif of the *prophesied child who is to bring about the death of his father or grandfather*. Once this story has been attributed to known mythological figures and their given internal relations, it must be modified in order to suit them. The parts are therefore tailored to suit the demands of Old Norse mythology, but the motifs remain, even if in new functions. The Scandinavian mythographers have altered the tales freely so that they may suit the Scandinavian gods' mythological functions.

The oldest Irish tales of Balor go back to the Eighth Century, according to Krappe, who cites Stokes<sup>46</sup> and Pokorny.<sup>47</sup> The same opinion is expressed by Müller-Lisowski on p. 321.

The authority for the dating must be based on a misunderstanding. Stokes says in the source quoted p. 52 that "O'Curry asserted and probably believed that even in the Ninth Century this story must have been very old". However, I cannot find that Stokes himself quotes any authority for such an early dating. On the contrary, he *disagrees* with the dating of the tale to the Ninth Century, and argues that the Old Norse words which occur in the text can scarcely have been in general use in Ireland before the Tenth or the Eleventh Century.

Since the Irish tale cannot be dated with certainty as being more ancient than the Old Norse, one can pose the question: Cannot the Baldr myth have been taken from Scandinavia to Ireland? This possibility seems to be excluded for the following reasons. The motif complex of Balor's eye with *the heavy eyelid* that must be lifted by several men, and *the glance that kills* is to be found

<sup>46</sup> STOKES, The Second Battle of Moytura p. 52 ff.

<sup>47</sup> ZCP 12 p. 332.

not only in Irish and Welsh tradition<sup>48</sup> but also in Slavonic tradition. As Krappe says (op. cit. p. 10 and 4 note 15), the Slavonic and Celtic traditions must stand in relation to each other.<sup>49</sup>

Consequently, the Scandinavian Baldr myth cannot have formed the basis of the Irish tradition of Balor's eye. The Irish Lugh-Balor myth must therefore be regarded as primary in comparison to the Loki-Baldr myth.

The Baldr myth, however, never obtained a firm hold in the Scandinavian oral tradition. It does not occur in the excellent reviews of Norwegian and Icelandic saga types compiled by Christiansen<sup>50</sup> and Sveinsson.<sup>51</sup> The saga of Baldr's death was a strange bird which could not survive without the protection of the cage of the literary and clerical tradition.

### *Variants of 931 in Wales and England*

In the Welsh tale cycle Mabinogion, dating from the 12th century, there occurs in the fourth branch, Math vab Mathonwy, a variant of The King and his Prophesied Death. type Aa 931.<sup>52</sup> The Welsh Llew has been compared with Lugh in the Irish tradition.<sup>53</sup> Comparison has even been attempted between a Welsh mythological figure, Beli, and the Irish Balor. The following genealogical table covering the mythical persons has been made by Rhys<sup>54</sup> who writes of this:

Treating the Welsh Beli as the consort of Don and regarding Irish Balor as well as Irish Beli as etymologically related to Beli, we may put the pedigrees of Llew and Lug side by side as follows:

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<sup>48</sup> KRAPPE, Balor with the Evil Eye p. 4 note 15. Yspaddaden Pennkawr with two evil eyes. The eyelids must be lifted up with pitchforks.

<sup>49</sup> The covered evil eye is one of the many examples of agreements which connect the East European with the Celtic traditions. Cf., for example, LILJE-BLAD. En slavo-keltisk folksaga p. 215 ff. and ROTH, The Cinderella Cycle p. 138. It must be remembered that the motif of the Gorgon-eye is also found in the tale of Perseus which belongs to type 931.

<sup>50</sup> CHRISTIANSEN, Norske Eventyr.

<sup>51</sup> SVEINSSON, Verzeichnis Isländischer Märchenvarianten.

<sup>52</sup> GRUFFYDD, Math vab Mathonwy. Cf. also *Duanaire Finn* 3 p. xlix.

<sup>53</sup> *Duanaire Finn* 3 p. lxxv.

<sup>54</sup> RHYS, Lectures on the Origin and Growth of Religion p. 318 note 2. Cf. also *Duanaire Finn* 3 p. lxxxiii.

Don [wife of Beli]	Ceithlenn [wife of Balor]
Arianrhod [mistress of Gwy-	Eithne [mistress of Macki-
dion brother of Govannon	neely brother of Gavida the
the smith]	smith]
Llew [the Solar Hero]	Lug [the Solar Hero].

Whatever the facts may be about this often quoted genealogy or combination of names, it is of interest that Math vab Mathonwy is partly built on motifs from type Aa 931, as Gruffydd has shown, even if neither Llew nor Beli plays a part in this tale.

Gruffydd also refers to some ten variants of The King and his Prophesied Death from Scotland, above all from the Gaelic speaking areas.<sup>55</sup> The hero's name is Conall in one variant, Finn in the others.

The Prophesied Death also returns in part in Shakespeare's Macbeth. In act IV Macbeth seeks the witches who conjure up evil spirits to reveal what the future has in store.

*First App.* Macbeth! Macbeth! Macbeth! beware Macduff:  
Beware the Thane of Fife. Dismiss me. Enough.

*Sec. App.* Be bloody, bold, and resolute; laugh to scorn  
The power of man, for *none of woman born*  
shall harm Macbeth.

*Macb.* Then live. Macduff: what need I fear of thee?  
But yet I'll make assurance double sure,  
And take a bond of fate: thou shalt not live:  
That I may tell pale-hearted fear it lies,  
And sleep in spite of thunder.

*Third App.* Be lion-mettled, proud, and take no care  
Who chafes, who frets, or where conspirers are:  
Macbeth shall never vanquish'd be until  
*Great Birnam wood to high Dunsinane hill*  
*Shall come* against him.

*Macb.* That will never be:  
Who can impress the forest, bid the tree  
Unfix his earth-bound root? Sweet bodements! good!  
Rebellion's head, rise never till the wood  
Of Birnam rise, and our high-plac'd Macbeth  
Shall live the lease of nature, pay his breath  
To time and mortal custom.

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<sup>55</sup> GRUFFYDD, op. cit. p. 113 ff. Variants of the King and his Prophesied Death.

The absurd elements in the prophecy can never take place and therefore Macbeth believes he need not fear death. Not until it is too late does Macbeth discover the double meaning of the fatal prophecy.

*Macb.*

I pull in resolution and begin  
To doubt the equivocation of the fiend  
That lies like truth: 'Fear not, till Birnam wood  
Do come to Dunsinane;' and now a wood  
Comes toward Dunsinane.

In the prophecy concerning the removal of Birnam Wood to Dunsinane, there is found a well-known stratagem (found in Saxo's *Gesta Danorum* and elsewhere, in which the enemy army attacks behind a screen of boughs).

Macduff is not born of woman:

*Macd.* Despair thy charm;  
And let the angel whom thou still hast serv'd  
Tell thee, Macduff was from his mother's womb  
Untimely ripp'd.

The elegant representation of the ambiguous prophecy rests on the robust form of the popular tradition: The hero can only be slain by a *certain person* and/or in an *absurd situation*. The Welsh Llew knows in contrast to Macbeth: "I bear a charmed life." In the Welsh tradition Llew reveals his *dihenydd* (his manner of death) to his false wife.

"I will say gladly," said he. "It is not easy to kill me," said he, "without a blow, and it were necessary to be a year making the spear with which I should be struck, and without making any of it except when they were at Mass on Sunday." "Is that certain?" said she. "Certain in truth," said he. "I cannot be killed in a house," said he, "nor can it [be done] outside; I cannot be killed on a horse, it cannot [be done] when I am afoot." "Yes," said she, "in what manner couldst thou be killed?" "I will tell thee," said he, — "by making me a bath on the bank of a river, and making a round roof above the vat, and thatching it well and snugly after that, and bringing a he-goat," said he, "and placing it beside the vat, and by my placing one foot on the back of the he-goat and the other on the edge of the vat. Whoso-

ever should hit me so would work my death." "Yes," said she, "I thank God for that: it will be easy to escape from that."

As Gruffydd has shown *the wisdom tests* — the solution of apparantly impossible tasks — have been combined with a special form of the manner of death.<sup>56</sup> It is the tale of the wise girl, type Aa 875, which here gives rise to "absurd situations". In this type of the tale the girl is to come, for example, neither dressed nor undressed, neither on foot nor on horse-back, neither alone nor with followers, etc. These tasks which the girl solves and thereby shows her wisdom are well known in several sources, including the tale of Kráka and Ragnar Loðbrók, which can be added to the examples given by Gruffydd. Interesting in this connection are also the representations on a misericord of man or woman dressed in net with one foot on a goat and the other on the ground, which, as Gruffydd remarks, illustrate the wisdom tests and thus ought not to be interpreted as lascivious representations.<sup>57</sup>

The examples given in this section show that the Oedipus tale was popular in British tradition during the Middle Ages. It has also been conserved in the popular oral tradition until recent times. After this survey of the Near Eastern and European, above all the British material, we can return to the Scandinavian myth of Baldr.

### *The Scandinavian Variants of Type 931*

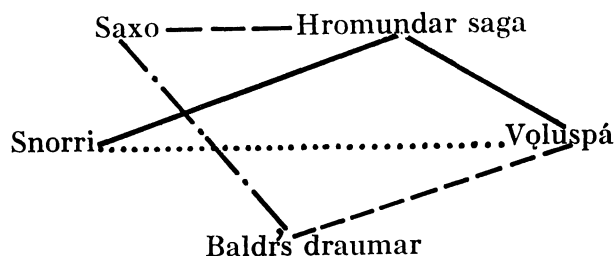
Of the Scandinavian variants Snorri and Völuspá share in common the motif of the *mistletoe plant* as weapon. Saxo's tale and Hromundar saga share the motif *rivalry* between Baldr and Høðr as well as the *sword* as weapon. The name *Mistilteinn* (mistletoe) constitutes a link between Hromundar saga and the traditions in Snorri and Völuspá. Further, Baldr's draumar and Völuspá share in common *Rind*, who is to *give birth to Óðinn's son*, avenger of Baldr. These motifs, which like threads bind the variants to each other, suggest that a rich tradition of type Aa 931 lies behind the mediaeval texts referred to here, which, furthermore, explains

<sup>56</sup> GRUFFYDD, op. cit. p. 301.

<sup>57</sup> Ib. pp. 309, 313.



their internal similarities as well as their dissimilarities. These circumstances can also account for the likeness between individual details in the Scandinavian material and corresponding details in that of the British Isles.



*Key to the symbols:*

- =The name Mistilteinn.
- =The sword as weapon. The rivalry.
- .....=The plant as weapon.
- =Rind gives birth to Óðinn's son, avenger of Baldr.
- =-=-=The nightold son of Óðinn carries Höðr to the pyre.

The diagram on p. 131 is intended to illustrate the agreements in details of motifs in type Aa 931 found in British and Scandinavian tradition. This diagram might be interpreted in such a way that one of the prototypes of the Baldr myth has been the novelle of Thebes and its *combination of prophesied death, manslaughter, and the journey to the underworld* in order to bring back the dead Laius, that is to say, just that combination which is to be found in Snorri's version of the Baldr myth, in Völuspá and in Baldrs draumar, which are intimately related to Saxo and Hromundarsaga, as may be seen from the diagram above. Further, from the diagram one may perceive that a tradition of the same kind as the death of Fergus was known and has partly provided the basis for Snorri's and Saxo's stories.

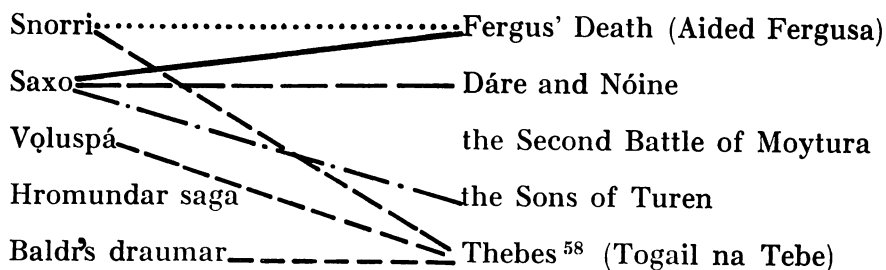
*The dream of the impending death* and the cause of death, *Mistilteinn the sword* or *Mistilteinn the plant* are recurrent motifs. Of all the characters, *Baldr* is the only one who has a traditional place in this tale of the Prophesied Death. Baldr and the Prophesied Death must be conceived as the central theme, that which is common to the texts which otherwise differ from each other.

*The Mediaeval Tradition of the Oedipus Tale or Type 931*

Scandinavian tradition

British tradition

The tale of:

*Modern Tradition*

O'Donovan and others (see p. 114 ff.)

*Key to the symbols:*

- = Furious heroine concipiates. (Man dressed as a woman.)  
 - - - - - = Type 931 (+fratricide) + Journey to Hel to fetch back some-one dead.  
 ..... = Blind slaver.  
 ————— = Bath scene, rivalry.  
 - . - . - . - = Hero's brilliance blinds the people.

<sup>58</sup> The cycles of motifs found in the Irish stories have their counterparts in the Classical tragedies of Fate which were well known through the Achilleid and the Thebaid. I have here no opportunity to discuss the Thebaid and Mediaeval nouvelles connected with it which are based on Classical material. In this context, I shall only stress the importance which Statius and the Thebaid have had in Mediaeval European tradition. In *La Légende d'Œdipe* p. 144 CONSTANS says on this subject: "On trouve la *Thébaïde* dans toutes les bibliothèques importantes du moyen-âge: dans celle de la cathédrale de Rochester, au <sup>x</sup>e siècle (Voir Warton, *Story of English Poetry*); dans celle du fameux monastère de Pomposa, en Italie, dont le catalogue a été rédigé au <sup>XI</sup>e siècle: dans celle de Richard de Furnival, au <sup>XIII</sup>e; dans celle du pape Nicolas V (<sup>XV</sup>e siècle), qui était, comme on sait, toute composée d'auteurs profanes, etc. Sulpice Sévère (*Dial.* III) nous apprend que, de son temps, on étudiait Stace dans les écoles." And p. 145 ff.: "En pleine barbarie, et dans des pays où l'on ne pouvait guère le soupçonner, nous voyons Stace connu et cité avec éloge. Helmold, que l'on regarde comme le père de l'histoire des peuples du nord de l'Europe (<sup>XII</sup>e siècle), nous apprend, dans sa *Chronique des Slaves*, l. I, ch. 43, que l'*Achilleïde* était étudiée parmi ces peuples à demi-barbares: 'Quadam die, multis arbitris coram positus, interrogavit Vicelinum in scholis positus quid legisset. Illo perhibente se Statii libros *Achilleïdos* legere, conse-

A survey of the Scandinavian mythological material<sup>59</sup> is sufficient to show that it is rash to characterize Loki and Baldr as evil and dark and good and light respectively. In the five Scandinavian variants of the myth of Baldr's death, it is only in one, namely Snorri's, that Loki plays a part. In the others different characters play the part as Baldr's adversary. We are concerned here with a work of fiction and its cast in different variants, not with religion and cult, as might be seen from this survey.

Saxo	Baldr—Høðr	rivals	dream	sword [Mimingus']	lethal weapon
Snorri	Baldr—Loki, Høðr		dream	plant [Mistilteinn] <sup>60</sup>	lethal weapon
Völuspá	Baldr, Víli, <sup>61</sup> Høðr		[prophecy]	plant [Mistilteinn]	lethal weapon
Hromundar saga	Bilðr, Víli, Høðr	rivals	dream	sword [Mistilteinn]	lethal weapon
Baldr's draumar	Baldr, Høðr		dream	—	

To demonstrate that this part of the Baldr myth belongs to the Oedipus tale is of vital importance for the conclusions drawn about the character of Loki (and also that of Baldr), no less than the fact that *Loki plays the part of the slayer* in only one version

quenter requisivit quae esset materia Statii." Concerning the connection between the classical tale of Thebes and other European Mediaeval tradition, see also MACKINNON p. 194 ff. and CONSTANS, *Le Roman de Thebes* 2 p. xxiv ff. Cf. also BUGGE, *Studier* p. 103 ff. and 146 ff., where he points out both the similarity between Saxo's Baldr—Høðr tale and tale of the Trojan War, and the part this tale has played in the European literature in the Middle Ages, pp. 106, 117, 152 ff.

<sup>59</sup> The death of Lämminkäinen in Finnish runic poetry also belongs to this motif cycle. The blind shepherd who has been overlooked by Lämminkäinen becomes the murderer and the plant becomes — like the mistletoe — the lethal weapon. Cf. DÄHNHARDT, *Natursagen* 2 pp. 211 and 214. KROHN, *Lämminkäinenens tod < Christi > Balders tod*.

<sup>60</sup> The *Vikarsaga* and the *Gautreksaga* have only one motif in common with the Baldr myth, namely *the plant* transformed into a lethal weapon, or the jesting blow which proves fatal. As *these two tales describe a feigned sacrifice on a windless day which fate transforms into a real one*, many scholars have interpreted Baldr's death also as a feigned sacrifice, based on a ritual sacrifice of a king. (Cf. NECKEL, *Die Überlieferungen* p. 26 and KAUFFMANN, *Balder* p. 250 ff.) In the five Baldr myths quoted here, Baldr's death is only the fulfilment of inevitable fate. The Baldr myth makes no mention of sacrificial death, as is made evident in the European variants of type 931.

<sup>61</sup> Also in *Hyndluljóð* 29:5—8 we find mention of Víli, Baldr's brother and avenger. Cf. also p. 174.

of the Oedipus tale. From this it must be evident that scholars have not been justified in stressing Loki's part as the slayer and enemy of the Asa gods to the extent of interpreting it as a mythological characteristic.

In this myth of remote origin both in time and place, we find a myth pattern designed long before the Old Norse Loki figure was allotted a place in it.

### *The Mistletoe*

A motif which in itself has caused much discussion is that of the mistletoe. This motif has been taken out of its *literary context* and to it has been attached special importance. Extracted from the Baldr myth, it has been intertwined with other green twigs, taken from various literary contexts, to form a wreath of symbols of eternally verdant life, key to the Underworld, symbol of Paradise, twig of fertility and life.

Thus Neckel sees in the mistletoe a "life twig" which develops into a lethal weapon. A development which Neckel explains by the fact that Baldr is a god of vegetation. Neckel correlates the mistletoe with the *twig* which occurs as a symbol in certain descriptions of journeys to the Underworld. In Virgil's *Æneid* it is known as *Ramus Aureus*. A herb of life is mentioned in the Gilgamesh epos in connection with the journey to the Underworld and, as Neckel points out, it is related to the Babylonian Adapa myth and the description of Paradise in Genesis. I would like to classify both these Oriental myths — not as connected with a fertility cult — but as explanatory myths on the theme of How Death Came into the World.

There is another Scandinavian text, namely Saxo's saga of Hadding, where a woman comes out of the earth with a green twig in her hand and takes Hadding on a journey to the Underworld. In this is also found a description of the river with weapons — a motif which is also mentioned in *Völuspá's* account of the journey to the Underworld, and which evidently is part of the Mediaeval katabasis tradition. Hadding's journey to the Underworld is preceded by an account of how Hadding with the aid of a giant woman has questioned a dead man about his future. This episode

is reminiscent of the accounts of the dead man or woman who is questioned about the journey to the Underworld in Baldr's Draumar as well as in the Gilgamesh epos.

In the same way as the woman appears before Hadding with a green twig and asks him to come with her to the Underworld, there also appears in an Irish Twelfth Century work a beautiful woman to Condla. She gives him an apple and asks him to come with her to the Land of the Eternal Life. When, after a month, she comes back, he follows her.<sup>62</sup> The green twig in the middle of Winter or the apples from the Underworld or from the wonderful island of the sea god Manannan mac Lir or the Avallon of the Arthur tale, are only the *visible signs* of another, more wonderful, world — a land of bliss. The apples or the twig are meant as signs from another world and have evidently nothing to do with rites or cults of fertility in this connection.

It is certainly correct that the mistletoe — like the flying rowan — on account of its parasitical way of growth has been regarded as peculiar and thus bound to play a part in popular superstition and magic.<sup>63</sup> Neckel has, however, understood the mistletoe to be especially promotive to life and fertility and has regarded it as an important piece of evidence of the Baldr myth being a fertility myth. The killing of Baldr is also understood by Neckel and Ström as a special rite, the killing of a king, in order to ensure a good harvest, forming part of a fertility cult.<sup>64</sup>

The mistletoe does not grow in Iceland. Neither the account in Völuspá nor that by Snorri clearly refers to the *mistletoe* (Vis-

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<sup>62</sup> A short account from Lebor na Huidre in BUGGE, Iduns Æbler p. 33.

<sup>63</sup> See v. SYDOW, Det ovanligas betydelse i tro och sed p. 61.

<sup>64</sup> Thus also MUCH in Balder p. 125. OLSEN has dismissed Neckel's theory of a fertility cult in the Baldr myth, as there are no grounds for such a theory. The expression "árs og friðar" is an exterior glamorisation of the Utopia which is to come after Ragnarök. There is no reason to regard Völuspá's story of the creation of the World, the feats of the Asa gods, the end of the World and its resurrection as a disguised myth of fertility and vegetation. What is told in Völuspá is the combination, common in myths, of creation and destruction — the opening of a new era. It is the myth of the creation and cataclysm of the World which is told in Völuspá. This myth is not typical only of agrarian cultures which ought to have been its first qualification if it was to be interpreted as an agrarian cult myth.

*cum album*). The obscure account in *Völuspá* gives as little of a clue as Snorri. It is also evident from the forms reported by Lyttkens that *mistel* (mistletoe) and the similarly sounding *vispel* or *mispel* have been confused. It is also clear, according to some recordings from Blekinge, that *mistel* or *mistelten* have come to mean *ivy*.

A man was out working in the woods. His wife used to come to him with his dinner. But one day, there came two women, both like his wife, to him with food. They both brought the same kind of food. Then he understood that the first one must have been the *skogssnua* (a wood spirit). When she came back the following day, he started to question her on how one should go about it if one wanted to shoot the *skogssnua* or what one could shoot her with. He then got the answer: "You can shoot her with '*messelten*' (ivy), *pölseben* (bone in sausage) and the small white thing (gartic) that grows in the earth." Then I will shoot you, said the man . . .<sup>65</sup>

. . . Nevertheless, it can happen even to-day that a provider of information says: There is still mistletoe to be found in Blekinge. This is due to the fact that the peasantry have a common name for the *mistletoe* and the *ivy* (*Hedera helix*). Both plants were called "*Mistelten*". Of a stone from a wall, a bone from a sausage, a "*Mistelten*" and a whole grain from a cake one could make a means of protection which worked both internally and externally . . .<sup>66</sup>

It is evident from the above that the Swedish names *mistel* and *mistelten* have come to represent even other plants than *Viscum album*. It may then be argued that we don't know if *Mistilteinn* means another plant than *Viscum album*. In spite of this and in spite of the fact that Snorri and *Völuspá* do not give a botanically satisfactory description of the plant, it is still likely that the word *Mistilteinn* does refer to the plant *Viscum album*. (It is possible that the Mediaeval pharmacopoeia could throw some further light on this detail of the problem. The above will, however, have to suffice for this survey.)

The motif used by the Baldr myth is probably that of the innocent plant *the mistletoe*, being the lethal weapon. I think in

<sup>65</sup> LUF 723: 25, from Tving, Blekinge.

<sup>66</sup> LUF 4352: 4, from Asarum, Blekinge.

this respect that Neckel is right and so does de Vries. But to stress the importance of the plant as being identical with the mistletoe in order to build the theory of a fertility cult on this identity is to press the material too much. That the plant should refer to a fertility cult seems to me, in this connection, to be rather far-fetched, inasmuch as

1. The identity however likely is not absolutely certain,
2. It could be explained as a common motif:

*the seemingly harmless* is dangerous, ugliness conceals beauty, what seems to be unimportant is really the treasure, etc. However, as will be seen in the following, the motif of the magic plant as a lethal weapon is also found in British tradition.

### The Mistletoe and the "Hardened Holly"

In the Balor and Lugh Story the spear occurs as a weapon, in Beowulf the arrow and in Iceland the plant Mistilteinn, in Denmark the sword of Mimungus and in Iceland the sword Mistilteinn. From this it is clear that all weapons together with *the plant* have been used in different variants as the dangerous fatal weapon. In one form of tradition (Saxo, Hromundarsaga) *the sword* is used, in the other (Snorri, Völuspá) *the plant*.<sup>67</sup>

The problem of whether the word Mistilteinn was originally used to designate a sword or a plant has been subject to discussion. Ström points out (p. 126) that the interpretation that has satisfied most scholars is that Mistilteinn as the name of a plant has been transferred to the common names of swords ending in -teinn.<sup>68</sup>

Ström provides a new important addition by stressing that there is a question of the mistletoe as a shooting or hurling weapon — not as a cutting weapon.

Wenn der Entwicklungsgang der von Detter u.a. angenommene gewesen wäre, hätte man billigerweise die todbringende Mistel als einen Pfeil oder einen Speer gedeutet und nicht als ein Schwert. Nichts hätte eine derartige Deutung gehindert:

<sup>67</sup> Cf. The death of Lemminkäinen p. 132 note 59.

<sup>68</sup> HOOPS, Reallexikon 3 p. 230. Cf. also BOBERG, Baldr og misteltenen p. 105.

*teinn* kann auch 'Speer' bedeuten. Es ist in der Tat schwer zu verstehen, wie man sie hätte vermeiden können, wenn die Voraussetzungen der Motivverschiebung die der herkömmlichen Exegese gewesen wäre.

Ström also quotes several instances of names of swords ending in *-teinn* (twig).<sup>69</sup> But as he points out himself, a *wooden* sword is meaningless while an arrow or a spear without doubt would have been more suitable weapons.

In the discussion regarding this question, one has thought of the *mistel* (mistletoe) as a magic plant combined with *-teinn*, a common ending for the names of swords. The interesting thing is that the whole word *Mistelten* is used, though sparingly, as a plant name in Scandinavia. The plant's name, *Mistelten*, with the following variations (*Misteltein*, *Mestertjene* from Denmark, *Mistiltein*, *Misteltenn* from Norway, and also *Mispel*-, *Mespel*-, *Vispel*-, *Vespelten*) are quoted by Lyttkens.<sup>70</sup> Names of plants ending in *-ten* occur, as far as I have been able to establish, only in connection with *Mistel* (and the forms *Mispel* and *Vispel*) and nowhere else. These names seem chiefly to belong to the learned tradition of the pharmacopoeia. Only exceptionally is *mistelten* a popular plant name and it is then used of other *winter green plants*, as, for example, *the ivy*.<sup>71</sup>

Regarding the mistletoe, von Hofsten in his investigation has come to the result that the mistletoe cannot be of great value as evidence to prove the country of origin of the poem. "The motif, which under no circumstances is Icelandic, could have been Norwegian, but could also have come from the area round Lake Mälaren in Sweden or from the British Isles."<sup>72</sup> Of the three botanical-

<sup>69</sup> Cf. DE VRIES, *Altgerm. Religionsgeschichte* 2<sup>1</sup> p. 39.

<sup>70</sup> LYTTKENS, *Svenska växtnamn* 3 p. 1174 ff. Cf. also JENSSEN-TUSCH p. 147 *Mespilus germanica*, p. 266 *Viscum album*, p. 232 *mistel*: *flygrönn*, p. 67 *Cotoneaster vulgaris*. Cf. also HOOPS, *Waldbäume und Kulturpflanzen im germanischen Altertum* p. 606 *Mispel* (*Mespilus germanica*).

<sup>71</sup> S. B. Vide, Keeper of Archives, who is a specialist of popular plant names, has informed me that he only knows of one case of this from the South of Sweden, and in that instance it should rather be attributed to a learned etymologisation inspired by a knowledge of the Edda.

<sup>72</sup> v. HOFSTEN, *Eddadikternas djur och växter* p. 47.



geographical alternatives, the British Isles is the only area which has a tradition corresponding to that of Baldr and Hqðr.

Of special interest in this connection is Hansen's remark that *Mistilteinn* must be a borrowing from ags. *mistletán*, as the Norwegian name for *Viscum album* is *ledved*, which is evident from the geographical distribution of the name.<sup>73</sup> For this reason Norway can, therefore, be excluded as an area of origin of the motif *Mistilteinn*. Taking botanical-geographical and linguistic reasons into account, it seems likely that the motif *Mistilteinn* was borrowed from the British Isles to Iceland. In support of this theory speaks also the ethnological reason — the existence of the myth in British tradition. If one adds to this the point that the names *Hæðcyn* and *Herebeald* in Beowulf could be coupled with Hqðr and Baldr, the existence of *Baldr-Hqðr-Mistilteinn* in Icelandic tradition indicates a borrowing of the myth from Anglo-Saxon tradition.

In this context we are reminded of the fact that in the Irish tradition we meet the motif of "the misdirected weapon", and that this weapon is a spear made of *holly* (*aquifolium*, see p. 113 note 25). The spear with which Ferchis is killed by Ael (Ailill) is made of *hardened holly*. The motif might appear impossible to understand, but is explained by the Mediaeval beliefs concerning this plant. The magic powers of this plant are described in the Norwegian *Speculum Regale*, which goes back to the Irish *Mirabilia*.<sup>74</sup>

There is also a certain lake in that land, about the nature of which a wonder is told. That lake is called in their tongue *Loch Echach* (Lough Neagh). That lake is very large in size. And this is the nature of that water. If you take the wood that some call *beinwið*, and some *hulfr* (holly), and which in Latin is called *acrifolium*, and you place it in the water so that some of it stands in the earth below, and some in the water, and some up out of the water, then that which stands in the earth below turns into iron, and that which is in the water into stone, and the wood that stands out of the water

<sup>73</sup> LID, *Gudar og Gudedyrkning* p. 94. HANSEN, *Mistelteinene i Norge* p. 330. Cf. also KROHN, *Lemminkäinen's tod < Christi > Balders tod* p. 121.

<sup>74</sup> MEYER, *The Irish Mirabilia in the Norse "Speculum Regale"* p. 303.

remains as it was. But if you take wood of another kind than this, it does not change its nature, though you place it in this water.

The instances cited afford a glimpse of the Mediaeval tradition which in Western Europe runs parallel to Old Scandinavian literature and which, in the case of *Speculum Regale*, has a direct and obvious connection with a British prototype.

The Irish tradition of the Death of Fergus in *Silva Gadelica* (see p. 111 note 19) is a compound of the Irish *Mirabilia* and the motifs of "the *misdirected* weapon" and "the accidental shot by the *blind* poet" in the tale of the Death of Fergus. Also the enumeration of questions and answers is the same in *Silva Gadelica* as in the Irish *Mirabilia* and in the Norse *Speculum Regale*. Here we have a connection between the magic plant holly which can be turned into iron and stone i.e. the spear of "hardened holly", and the mistletoe which becomes the cause of Baldr's death. Thus in the tale of the Death of Fergus we have both the motif of the *blind slayer* and the motif of the *magic plant* as the lethal weapon.

Both the Irish and Anglo-Saxon traditions indicate that the motif cycle associated with the episode of Baldr's death embodying the plant as a weapon and the blind slayer has its origin in the cycles of Fergus and Balor in the British Isles and has spread from there to Scandinavia. It is not possible to refer the Scandinavian tradition to either the *Irish* or the *Anglo-Saxon* tradition. Both seem to have made their contributions to the Scandinavian Baldr myth (see p. 241). Very little is known as to the relationship between Anglo-Saxon and Irish literature but once that problem has been thoroughly treated, further light can perhaps be shed on this problem.

### *Summary*

It falls outside the scope of this work to show the connection between the different variants of type 931. My intention has been only to *stress that the Baldr myth, parts 1—2, is a variant of type 931, the Oedipus tale*. It also seemed necessary to me to show that at the time the Baldr myth was written down in Iceland, the Oedipus story was well known in the British Isles as well as in

the Continental Europe. As the story of Baldr-Loki and Høðr often has been considered to give a true picture of Old Norse religious conceptions, I found it necessary to stress that the Baldr story had its pattern outside Scandinavia. Because of that we have no right to regard it as authentic for the Loki figure. Since Scandinavian tradition agrees in various details with the British, which cannot simply be explained by the Classical story, I conclude that the Classical Oedipus tale reached Scandinavia from the British Isles. In any case it has been strongly influenced by the British tradition.

### 3. Baldr's funeral

Loki plays no part in this section, which therefore contains nothing of immediate interest to this investigation. In this part which merely describes Baldr's funeral and the funeral procession of the gods a number of accessory figures take their stance beside the dead Baldr. Neckel refers to several similar funeral scenes in Old Norse literature (p. 29 ff., 45 ff.).

Neckel has quite rightly expressed the view that this part differs both from Snorri's other narratives as well as Old Icelandic narratives as a whole. "Diese sind, kurz gesagt, Erzählungen, die Bestattungsszene aber ist eine Beschreibung." This part in Snorri corresponds to Húsdrápa from the close of the Tenth Century by the Skald Ulfr Uggason, who describes the pictures in Óláfr pái's hall. In this respect Húsdrápa ought to be brought into relationship with the flowering of the artistic skill in pictorial descriptions and the flowering of *the narrative art* which started at the beginning of the Eighth Century.<sup>75</sup> Whether Húsdrápa refers to wood carvings or to tapestries is an open question. As Arberman and Cinthio have pointed out, there is no doubt that textile art has been of great importance for narrative art (op. cit. p. 66 ff.).<sup>76</sup>

<sup>75</sup> Cf. ARBMAN-CINTHIO, *Vår äldsta konst* p. 65.

<sup>76</sup> Cf. The Hølandet tapestry from the Twelfth Century with Christian motifs. Its style and technique seem related to those of the Bayeux tapestry according to WALLEM, *La broderie de l'église de Hølandet en Norvège et son rapport avec la tapisserie de Bayeux*.

It was possibly this part of the Baldr myth depicted in Scandinavian representational art that Ulfr Uggason the skald saw at Óláfr pái's hall and described in a poem which has been assigned to the close of the Tenth Century.<sup>77</sup> A figure corresponding to Hyrrokin, riding on a wolf using snakes as reins is depicted — without, however, other motifs from the Baldr myth — on a stone from Hunnestad in Scania (Arbman-Cinthio op. cit. p. 82). Processions are shown on the long figural tapestries from the Oseberg ship, and the question is whether the processions are borrowed motifs or belong to a native Scandinavian tradition or cult.

If, as Neckel opines, the pictures in question were wood carvings representing Baldr's funeral procession, it is not necessarily Irish myth material which was depicted, even if the artistic technique points to influence from Ireland. This is indeed a just observation, supported by other observations from early Mediaeval art. In for example the pictorial carvings found on Manx crosses the choice of motifs is inspired by Scandinavian tradition while the technique undoubtedly has its roots in Celtic art.<sup>78</sup> The ornamental borders on the Gotland stones are derived from British prototypes and, according to Arbman and Cinthio (op. cit. p. 67), constitute "the surest basis for the dating of the stones". The influence of *British art* at the beginning of the Eighth Century is a fact which must be remembered when comparing *Scandinavian* and *British literature* or learned tradition from the early Middle Ages.

Earlier the connection between the Frankish poem and *Reginmál* has been stressed, a connection to which parallels are also to be found in art, namely, the influence of Frankish art in Scandinavia (cf. Arbman-Cinthio op. cit. p. 74). Just as little as one can isolate Scandinavian art from associations with the Continent and the British Isles, can one scarcely isolate Scandinavian literature and fiction from British and Continental literature.

That *Part 3* of the Baldr myth is described in *Húsdrápa* is not without interest as it gives us a terminus ante quem for the Death

<sup>77</sup> HOOPS, *Reallexikon* 1 p. 159.

<sup>78</sup> LEACH, *Tynwald Day on the Isle of Man* p. 136. Unfortunately I have been unable to consult Megaw's book on the Manx Crosses and must be content with referring to SHETELIG, *Manx Crosses* and KERMODE, *Manx Crosses*.

of Baldr. It shows that the episode of Baldr's death and funeral pyre were known to the poet of *Húsdrápa* which usually is dated as early as to the end of the Tenth Century.

#### 4. The journey to Hel and the Orpheus myth

In *Part 4* there is only one complex of motifs having any connection with the Loki figure, namely those concerned with the condition that all things should mourn Baldr in order to make him return from the dead, as well as the giant woman, Þökk (Loki), who refuses to mourn Baldr and thus prevent his return. This complex of motifs belongs in part to the Orpheus myth, of which *Part 4* in Snorri is a variant. The motif, however, is also associated with the story of the Passion, already treated above, in which Judas refused to join in the mourning for the death of Christ.

In *Völuspá* 36—39 and Baldr's draumar (*Vegtamskviða*) we have tales of journeys to the Underworld, corresponding in Snorri to Hermóðr's journey to the Underworld. In Baldr's draumar Óðinn goes to Hel in order to consult a dead seeress about the meaning of the dream. She reveals the tragic fate that is in store for Baldr and Höðr. Thus the dream is the introduction and the cause of the journey to the Underworld to ask a dead seeress to interpret the dream.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> *Völuspá* and Baldr's draumar conform to a common type of the Mediaeval katabasys tradition: a visit to the Underworld to consult one of the dead and obtain answers to various mysterious problems. Confusion easily takes place between the katabasys tradition and the Orpheus tale, in which the important thing is to bring back a beloved person from the dead. Common to both is *the journey* to the Underworld. In this form of Mediaeval katabasys tradition the principal emphasis, however, is placed on the *description* of the kingdom of the dead — cf. *Völuspá* 36, 38. The function of these narratives can be said to give listeners information about conditions after death. According to the way a person has lived and acted during his life on earth he will be rewarded or punished after death — cf. *Völuspá* 39 — a concept which we come across already in the Babylonian epos: Gilgamesh consults the dead Engidu about the next life. Or else the wanderer encounters on his way to the Underworld, or in the Underworld, remarkable visions which are explained to him: this is the punishment or the reward in store

Völuspá, as the name suggests, covers in its entirety the seeress' prophecy for the future<sup>80</sup> and a review of incidents in the remote past. It is worth noticing, however, that the consultation of the seeress (cf. the consultation of the dead seeress in Baldr's draumar) occurs in verses 28, 29 in other words as the introduction to the Baldr myth, which begins in verse 31. In Völuspá the journey to the land of the dead follows immediately after the story of Baldr's death. The journey to the Underworld contained in Völuspá would lack justification in its context if tradition had not followed a pattern embodying this combination of the tale of Oedipus and the journey to the Underworld, a combination with which we are familiar not only in the Old Norse Oedipus tale but also in the Thebaid (cf. above p. 152), where Mercury is sent to *fetch the dead Laius* who assumed the form of a *prophet and seer*. The journeys to the Underworld and the divination found in Völuspá and Baldrs draumar were concerned with obtaining answers to cryptic matters. In Snorri the journey to Hel has another function — to *bring back* Baldr, not to ask questions about the future.

In the Orpheus myth the purpose of the journey to the Underworld is to *find* and *bring back* someone from the dead. In these accounts the living person (husband, father, brother, sister) travels to the kingdom of the dead to bring back with him a beloved person. The lords of the Underworld promise that the dead person may return under a certain condition such as: Orpheus may not turn round and look at Eurydice. If the stipulation is not observed, the dead person must remain in the Underworld. It is this form of the Orpheus myth which appears in the Baldr myth

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for mortals after their days on earth. Cf. for example LIESTÖL, *Draumkvædet*. A Norwegian visionary poem from the Middle Ages, with detailed bibliography. A traditional introduction is a man on his way to church falling asleep and in his dream experiencing the vision of the underworld. The dream or the ecstatic vision is interpreted as the mortal's way of acquiring knowledge about cryptic things. STRÖMBÄCK, *Om Draumkvædet och dess källor*.

<sup>80</sup> As we have compared this part of Völuspá with the story of Oedipus in the Second Battle of Moytura we may as well point out that in this Irish story the seeress Badb, like the völva, prophesies of the destruction of the world.

found in Snorri's part four. The Classical Orpheus myth is in various respects related to Asiatic journeys to the Underworld. Despite the great differences in space and time between the stories of Izanagi's, Ishtar's and Gilmesh's journeys to the Underworld and the Orpheus myth, these myths share certain detail-motifs that are difficult to explain except on the assumption that a genetic relationship links them together. These are motifs that cannot be dismissed with the explanation that they are "natural" in the context. I hope to return to these problems in another work.<sup>81</sup>

*The Stipulation in the Orpheus Story and the Lament of  
Nature in the Story of Passion*

The dead Baldr is to be fetched back from Hel, just as the deceased in the Orpheus myth is to be fetched back from the Underworld.

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<sup>81</sup> An interesting and erudite piece of research, written from the point of view of the history of religion, on the Orpheus myth has recently been brought out by ÅKE HULTKRANTZ, *The North American Indian Orpheus Tradition*. The main emphasis in this investigation is given to the American material and it provides an excellent complement to GAYTON's small but important work, *The Orpheus Myth in North America*. Gayton's historical-geographical investigation supplies with the aid of its map of the geographical distribution of certain detail motifs evidence of the inner coherence that the myth can preserve in spite of its spread over areas even greater than the distance between the Near East and Scandinavia. In American Indian studies the importance of the *oral* tradition is confirmed with the lack of writing. The connection between variants, agreements in detail motifs between wholly separate geographical areas and proved geographical continuity are facts. How the *spread* has taken place can remain an insoluble problem, but the proving of the geographical *distribution* as such is evidence of historical value no less than the proving of archaeological data, where the presence of objects speaks of context and communications, without the *route of the spreading* being necessarily scientifically established. The American Indian material is easier to work with inasmuch as there is no written tradition to take into account. In Asia and Europe one is concerned to pay regard to the importance of the literary tradition and the problems it can pose, side by side with those presented by the oral sources. The geographical distance does not in itself constitute an obstacle to the linking of the myth of Hermóðr's journey to the underworld with the Oriental myths with similar subject matter. It is, how-

In Snorri's Baldr myth, as is usually the case concerning the deceased in the Orpheus myth, the goddess of the land of the dead promises that Baldr may return to the living on *one condition: that all things mourn him*. This is different from the more customary stipulations: keep awake, do not look upon the dead etc. The unique condition in the Baldr myth is not complied with because Þökk refuses to mourn Baldr.<sup>82</sup> Baldr has to remain in the underworld. This is the conclusion of the Orpheus myth. The moral of the story is that no living creature can triumph over death, not even Orpheus, Izanagi or Gilgamesh.

In Snorri the Lament of Nature is treated in this way:

Thereupon the Aesir sent over all the world messengers to pray that Baldr be wept out of Hel; and all men did this, and quick things, and the earth, and stones, and all metals, — even as thou must have seen these things weep when they come out of frost and into the heat.<sup>83</sup> Then, when the messengers went home, having well wrought their errand, they found, in a certain cave, a giantess; she called herself Þökk. They prayed her to weep Baldr out of Hel, she answered:

Þökk will weep waterless tears  
For Baldr's bale-fare;  
Living or dead, I loved not the churl's son;  
Let Hel hold to that she hath!

And men deem that she who was there was Loki Laufeyarson, who hath wrought most ill among the Aesir.

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ever, more reasonable, as far as the Scandinavian texts are concerned, to seek prototypes closer at hand, especially as these Scandinavian texts do not belong to the popular oral tradition but to a learned and literary one.

<sup>82</sup> NECKEL, op. cit. p. 170, has linked this motif with Ereshkigal, who does not weep over Tammuz in Ishtar's journey to the Underworld.

<sup>83</sup> The Icelandic expression "Allir hlutir gráta Balldur úr helju, nema kol" can be traced back to the Snorra Edda. A suggestion which has been brought forward is that the word "kol" (coal) has been confused with "kål" (cole), i.e. the cabbage-stalk which alone could be made into the cross of Christ in Toledóth Jeschu. The words "kyks né dauðs / nautka ek karls sonar, / haldi Hel því er hefir" have no meaning according to Bugge, unless they are seen in connection with the lament of the whole world at the death of Our Lord. BUGGE, Studier pp. 57, 62 ff. therefore compares this passage with Cynewulf's Christ, which is based on material from the Tenth Homily of Gregory the Great, drawing attention to the fact that Nature but not Men recognises the Saviour.



The taboo or stipulation is traditional in the Orpheus myth. But how to explain its present form: the Weeping of all Nature? We must remember that there is a similar motif in the Classical Orpheus story; Orpheus is playing so beautifully that the powers of the Land of the Dead are *moved to compassion* and promise to give Eurydice back on one condition, i.e. do not look at her. It is possible that the compassion of Nature in the Classical Orpheus story might have been of importance for the stipulation, which must be fulfilled, in the Baldr myth: the Mourning of the Whole Nature. But whence comes "the treachery by one who does not partake in the mourning?" I think v. d. Leyen has drawn attention to the right material when he points out Judas' role in the Passion story, which evidently was of importance to Snorri, as has been suggested above (p. 101).

About Loki's Judas-role v. d. Leyen writes as follows:

Das Toledóth Jeschu berichtet: Judas stahl Christi leichnam und verbarg ihn in seinem garten. Die jünger des herrn verbreiteten darauf das gerücht, Jesus sei auferstanden, grosse bestürzung war unter den Juden, ein grosses fasten und beten hub an. Nur Judas beteiligte sich daran nicht: als er aber von einem alten mann erfuhr, was man von Jesu leichnam erzähle, grub er diesen sofort aus, zeigte ihn überall und nun hatte das jammern ein ende (Eisenmenger, p. 191).

Since in Snorri Loki as an old woman plays the part of Baldr's enemy, this can explain why Snorri should also make him identical with the Judas in female guise who refuses to mourn the dead Baldr. In dealing with this motif, which is found only in Snorri, one must remember that it is just in Snorri that the introductory motifs to the Baldr myth have been taken from the legends of the Christian Passion (see above). Also belonging to the legends of the Christian Passion is the *refusal to participate in the lamenting* of the whole world at the death of Christ and it is probably this motif that Snorri has linked together with the motif in the Orpheus myth: the stipulation that is not met, with the result that the deceased must remain in the Underworld.

*The Lament of Nature — Part of the Tammuz Cult?*

Death and mourning are inseparably united both in fact and fiction. Here, however, it is a question of "the lament of Nature and the sighing of Creatures", a motif which occurs both in tales of the *death of the great god* (Pan)<sup>84</sup> and in the legends of the Christian Passion as well as in the Orpheus myth. Research has brought the stories of the death of Pan as well as the Orpheus myth into relationship with the Tammuz myth and the Tammuz cult, since tears and laments make their appearance in all three narratives. It is the overzealous attempt on the part of research to identify, behind and beyond fiction, a basis of reality, in this case the lamenting supposed to be part of the cult of Tammuz.

The motif of the lament of Nature or omens at the death of the god occur, however, even where no such *cult* exists. Some examples: It is related in a tale from Samoa that when the eel god dies a cloud of darkness descends over the whole world and the earth is covered with water. In a Magyar tale we are told that "Tartahot, the little dwarf with the long beard," is always preceded by a sighing in the treetops. When he dies, the forest will be still and silent. When Menabozo, the trickster of the Algonkin Indians dies, his dogs, the wolves, howl etc.

Like Dähnhardt (Natarsagen 2 p. 230 ff.), Bugge quotes some interesting examples from Mediaeval legends concerning the mourning of Christ and the *tears* and *sweat* of the things.

The lament and weeping of Nature play a specially important part in connection with "The Great Musician", who when he plays moves everything into passion including the powers of the Underworld. In this way the motif is represented in the European folk-songs about the Power of the Harp, which, according to Haavio, are based on the literary adaptation of the Classical Orpheus myth. This motif also occurs in the Finnish runic poetry, where Väinämöinen plays and weeps and makes all the wild animals gather round him. The great musician moving all Nature with his music is also found in Longfellow's Hiawatha, the motif be-

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<sup>84</sup> TAYLOR, Northern Parallels to the Death of Pan. BOBERG, Sagnet om den store Pans död.

ing borrowed from Kalevala which, as we know, Longfellow partly used as a model for Hiawatha.

These examples should suffice to show that the *lament of Nature* is a special *epic motif* in a special context: — the death of a god. The motif has a wide geographical spread, and there is no reasonable justification to suppose that the background of this motif of the lamenting Nature should be the ritual lament of the Tammuz cult. Neither is it advisable to come to a conclusion, based on such a *fictional motif*, that a “Tammuz cult” is the inspiration of the Baldr myth.

### *Loki as a Woman*

In the Orpheus myths there are no traits corresponding to Þökk — the disguised Loki — and the transformation into a woman could therefore, theoretically, be an authentic Loki motif.

This motif has been compared to the following reference in Lokasenna (verse 23) to Loki's appearance as a woman and has also been compared with Loki taking on the shape of a mare in the Ásgarðr myth

átta vetr vartu fyr jörð neðan  
kýr mólkandi ok kona,  
ok hefir þu þar þörn borit  
ok hugða ek args aðal

There is no explanation to this cryptic reference in Lokasenna to Loki as a woman milking cows either in the Ásgarðr myth or the Baldr myth. The information concerning Loki's sexual ambivalence as suggested by Lokasenna *may* therefore be a constitutive trait.<sup>85</sup>

It must, however, be noted that Snorri only mentions *en passant* that Þökk is identical with Loki (Enn þess geta menn at þar hafi verit Loki Laufeyiarson, er flest hefir illt gert með ásum). It can thus be a question of a subsequent rationalization of the material by Snorri in order to explain who Þökk was — the tear-

<sup>85</sup> Cf. DE VRIES, *The Problem of Loki* pp. 75, 211, 213, 115 ff., who treats the equally cryptic references in Hyndluljóð 40—41 and Fjölsvinnsmál 26 in connection with Lokasenna 23.

less old woman. Since in Snorri Loki plays the part of Baldr's enemy — disguised as a woman in order to find out what might harm Baldr — this may explain why Snorri has made him identical with the Judas in female guise who refuses to mourn for Baldr.

It therefore seems to me rather rash to come to a certain conclusion regarding Loki's sexual ambivalence judging only from his role in this epic context. To dress up as a woman is too common a motif in different literary contexts to justify such a conclusion. It is also a popular motif used to produce comical effects and situations.

### *Summary*

In this section I have tried to show the following:

1. that Part 4 of Snorri's Baldr myth is a variant of the Orpheus tale which has been included in the Oedipus tale;
2. that the inclusion of this type is found in *Völuspá*, *Baldrs draumar* and Snorri (Saxo);
3. that the same pattern is found in the Oedipus tale of the Thebaid;
4. that "the lament of Nature" seems to be borrowed from the legends of the Christian Passion;
5. that "the lament of Nature" is an epic motif and not founded on a rite in the Tammuz-cult;
6. that the theory of Loki's sexual ambivalence is very uncertain in this context but in the case of Lokasenna it may be an authentic trait.

This survey shows that the motifs in Part 4 are based on international material and none of these can therefore be said to show any authentic Loki traits — with the possible exception of Loki's sexual ambivalence as cryptically alluded to in Lokasenna.

### **5 a. The Capture and Fettering of Loki**

In this part of Snorri's Baldr myth two separate episodes have been combined, the capture of the Loki salmon and Loki's punishment. In his work on *Ragnarøk* Olrik has shown points of agree-

ment between *Loki's* punishment and that of the bound *Prometheus*.

The relationship between Loki's punishment and the Caucasian story tradition and that of the Classical literary world has thus already been shown by Olrik and it provides no traits constitutive in the case of the Loki figure worthy of mention. The *fettered enemy of the world* is a usual cosmological motif common to Europe and Asia. When the world comes to an end the fettered monster will break loose. A parallel to this motif found in Europe, Asia and America is provided by the *supporter of the world*, the pillar or animal on which the earth rests.<sup>86</sup> When the bearer tires or relaxes, the earth shakes and earthquakes occur. Or else the pillar is being pecked away by a bird or gnawed at by beast, and when this work is finished — which Man tries to prevent — the end of the world is at hand. In the same way when the fettered monsters chains have been gnawed asunder or when the wolf escapes from his fetters Ragnarøk is about to begin.<sup>87</sup>

It is not so much an evaluation of good and evil. It is rather an analogy to the primitive form of time reckoning: when such and such a thing happens, the time has come. When the leaves are as large as the ears of mice the time has come to start fishing, when spiders' webs lie in furrows the time has come to begin the spring farming, when the pillar of the world according to the Cheyenne Indians has been gnawed through by the iron teeth of the beaver and the chains of the fettered one has been filed away, then is the time for the end of the world. In the Asiatic tradition the thought of punishment, sin and guilt is often, however, present in the cosmological myth. The crime is then rebellion against God and the punishment expulsion and imprisonment or it is the ancestor's struggle against destructive powers (see p. 164 on Lucifer's fall and imprisonment). In the Scandinavian tradition guilt and punishment are also associated. The crime in the Scandinavian myth is the slaying of Baldr (or of Fimafeng together with blasphemy and the punishment is the fettering of Loki with his son's entrails to

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<sup>86</sup> Cf. A newly published work by HAEKEL, *Kosmischer Baum und Pfahl in Mythos und Kult der Stämme Nordwestamerikas*.

<sup>87</sup> Cf. THOMPSON, *Motif-Index A 1070—1080* with bibliographical references.

three cliffs. E. Mogk<sup>88</sup> is partly right when he asserts that Snorri places Loki's punishment in a causal relation to Baldr's death. It was, however, not Snorri but *an earlier mythographer* who has woven together two independent myths, the cosmological about the fettered monster and that of Baldr's death, thus interpreting the former as a punishment for the crime, which is the slaying of Baldr.

The fettered monster Loki is a cosmological motif, which the author of *Völuspá* — like Snorri — has exploited to the full, in that the narrative of the world's end is made to follow the motif of the fettered Loki.<sup>89</sup> In *Völuspá* the journey to Hel has however been placed between Loki's punishment and the end of the world. The author of *Völuspá* was familiar with both traditions of Baldr's death, on the one hand that of Hyndluljóð 29, Baldrs draumar and Saxo's on Váli, Óðinn's son (with Rind), who at the age of one night becomes the slayer of Hqðr (verse 33), on the other hand that found in Snorri concerning Loki's responsibility for Baldrs death and his subsequent punishment.

The order of events of the Baldr myth found in *Völuspá* and Snorri is as follows:

Snorri	Völuspá
1. Baldr's dream, the council of the Asa gods, the taking of the oath	(cf. Verses 23—26)
2. The mistle arrow, Hqðr's shot	Verses 31—32
3. Baldr's funeral	Verse 33
4. The journey to Hel	Verses 36—39
5. Loki's punishment <sup>90</sup>	Verses 34—35
6. The end of the world	Verses 40—58
7. The Utopia of eternal peace	Verses 59—66

<sup>88</sup> MOGK, *Novellistische Darstellungen mythologischer Stoffe Snorris und seiner Schule* p. 12 ff.

<sup>89</sup> The connection with the Classical Prometheus tradition, as well as the effect of Christian influence, has already been noted on p. 88.

<sup>90</sup> On the Christian characteristics in 5—7: the fettered devil, the end of the world and the kingdom of peace cf. pp. 82 ff., 85 ff.

It is not only possible, but probable, that verses 23–26 in *Völuspá* refer to the motif in Snorri's Baldr myth: the council of the Asa gods and the oath taking. In these verses the Asa gods' council and the breaking of oaths are mentioned but in a form which differs markedly from Snorri's version. It is primarily a description of a battle, which seems to be related to certain motifs in the Thebaid. Verse 25 has its counterpart in the tale of Apollo who has his revenge on Crotopus because he has killed Apollo's beloved and sends a monster who is slain by Coroebus. Then Apollo is filled with wrath:

And Apollo's anger was greater about that deed than about anything else that had been done to him. Then indeed Apollo brought many dire *pestilences* upon all the Greeks in common, and upon the city of Larissa in especial. And after that a Greek king, to wit, Crotopus, asked of Apollo what would ward off from them those clouds of fire and those pestilences which were destroying them through Apollo's anger. (Calder, *Togail na Tebe* p. 35)

Following this explanatory legend to the institution of a sacrifice the Thebaid takes up once more the Oedipus tale and its impending tragedy of fratricide:

That is the time, hour and period that Jove, Saturn's happy rich son, held meeting and counsel with the vast concourses of gods as to what vengeance he should inflict on the Thebans and on the Greeks for the evils they had done. And indeed ill did Juno brook that counsel to take vengeance on the Greeks, and she was hindering it. This is the counsel that Jove then took, to send his dear and much-loved son, Mercury, the messenger of the infernal gods, to hell to raise and to awake Laius, father of Oedipus, to make and enflame strife and anger, mutual jealousy and contention between his grandsons, Eteocles and Polynices. And when that counsel was fixed upon by Jove, son of Saturn, and by all the gods, Mercury, son of Maia, daughter of Atlas, arose and put round him his bare volatile full-beautiful bird-gear in order to hover and to fly above the earth. (Ib. p. 37.)

This description introduces the journey to the Underworld corresponding to that undertaken by Hermóðr in the Baldr myth part four and in *Völuspá* verses 36–39.

E. Wilken couples *Völuspá* verse 30 with Saxo's information on the war between Baldr and Høðr, which seems right if we consider that also Saxo's tale is a variant of the same theme as the *Thebaid*.<sup>91</sup>

According to E. Mogk,<sup>92</sup> Høðr, not Loki, was originally associated with Baldr's death a view supported by the supposedly old texts. *Völuspá*, *Baldrs draumar*, *Hyndluljóð* and Saxo. It is only in Snorri that Loki appears as the Slayer of Baldr and perhaps also in *Völuspá* as we will see in the following. Mogk is of the opinion that Loki's imprisonment in *Völuspá* verses 34—35 is an entirely new picture, which has been incorporated into the narrative and which is not connected with the preceding verses on Baldr's death. According to Mogk, this is indicated by the question at the end of verse 33: Know ye still more, then what ? and that this question forms the introduction to a new series of pictures. Against Mogk's argument the following objections can be made:

1. This refrain-like question is repeated several times — sometimes as an introduction to a new section but in many cases inserted in a coherent description of an episode — as for example between verse 28—29, 48—49, 62—63, 63—64. All these verses are united as regards contents and the refrain-like question is not intended to separate the lines. The repeated question can therefore not simply be regarded as an introduction to a new narrative as also Schröder has pointed out.

2. The existence of Váli's entrails in verse 34 is undoubtedly connected with verse 33, Óðinn's night old son, here anonymous, but in *Baldrs draumar*, *Hyndluljóð* and in Saxo called Váli, Baldr's avenger. In *Völuspá* verse 32—33 there is a reference to the incident of Váli's entrails<sup>93</sup> being used as Loki's fetters, which corresponds to Snorri's tradition concerning Loki's son Váli who becomes a wolf and kills his brother Nari whose entrails are used to bind Loki. This motif shows that verses 34—35 cannot be separated from the preceding description of Baldr's death, i.e. verse 31—33. Consequently, the editor of *Völuspá* must have con-

<sup>91</sup> Cf. p. 130 ff.

<sup>92</sup> MOGK, *Lokis Anteil an Baldrs Tode* p. 2 ff.

<sup>93</sup> According to KAUFFMANN the mention of Váli's entrails must depend on a misunderstanding of a kenning. Cf. GOLTHER, *op. cit.* p. 424 note 2.



nected the motifs of *Óðinn's night old son and the slayer of Høðr with the fettering of Loki with the aid of Váli's (Nari's) entrails* already before Snorri.

3. The sequence of the seven episodes in Snorri and *Völuspá* seems to indicate that already the author or editor of *Völuspá* was familiar with this order of events: The killing of Baldr with the mistletoe, the journey to Hel and Loki's punishment.

The cosmological motif of the chained Loki, the fettered monster, which forms the end of the Baldr myth has become the natural transition to the Cosmology in the episodes 6 and 7: Ragnarøk when the chains break and afterwards the Utopia of eternal peace. This composition is accomplished already in *Völuspá*.

It is, however, as Schneider and Ström have asserted, a fact that the conception of the evil Loki is present already in what is considered the oldest texts, such as *Haustlong* and *Völuspá*. The author of the latter work has also, as has been pointed out above, known the Baldr myth in its entirety. The conception of the evil and fettered Loki in the oldest texts and Saxo's identification of *Útgardaloki* with the devil (see p. 82) cannot be ignored. The motif of the fettered Loki must have been borrowed and adapted to Scandinavian mythology before it was used by the poet of *Haustlong*, the date of which is a *terminus ante quem* for this motif. The dating of *Haustlong* is usually referred to the Ninth or Tenth Century. The following chronological table shows the occurrence in the texts:

The fettered Loki	<i>Haustlong</i> , 9th Century <sup>94</sup>
The fettered Loki, punished for abusing the gods (and <i>Fímafeng's</i> death)	<i>Lokasenna</i> , 10th Century <sup>94</sup>
The fettered Loki, punished for Baldr's death	{ <i>Völuspá</i> , 10th Century <sup>94</sup> <i>Snorri</i> , 13th Century
Høðr, punished for Baldr's death	{ <i>Baldrs draumar</i> , 10th Century <sup>94</sup> and <i>Völuspá</i> <i>Saxo</i> , 13th Century <i>Hyndluljóð</i> , 12th, 13th Centuries <sup>94</sup>

<sup>94</sup> According to Finnur Jónsson's dating. Helgason takes a more realistic view and is of the opinion that the only certain date is the Thirteenth Century. MEYER gives reasons for dating *Völuspá* to the Twelfth Century in *Völuspa* p. 256 ff.

*Summary*

What is important to this investigation is to establish:

1. the congruence between the Baldr myth Parts 1—7 and Völuspá verses 23—26, 31—32, 33, 36—39, 34—35, 40—58, 59—66 (see p. 151).
2. the congruence between these sources and the Oedipus tale of the Thebaid — with the exception of the cosmological ending the Baldr myth parts 1—5 and Völuspá verses 23—26, 31—32, 33, 36—39, 34—35).
3. that the motif of the fettered Loki occurs already in, what is considered to be, the earliest texts.
4. that this motif is common to both Christian (see pp. 46, 84) and classical traditions and that it has been borrowed and secondarily connected with the Scandinavian Loki figure.
5. that, as can be seen from 2, 3 and 4, the earliest sources have not, in spite of their great antiquity, preserved any heathen traits concerning Loki which could be authentic.

The scholars who have stressed Loki's part of *the evil one* already in the *earliest sources* have failed to notice that it is not a question of heathen native tradition but of borrowings from both Christian and Classical myth material, which are secondary contributions to the figure of Loki (cf. p. 47).

The reason why the myth of the fettered enemy of the world has been connected to the Loki figure and no one else, is a problem which is going to be treated in a later chapter, see p. 208.

Naturally it would have been a very attractive solution to be able to agree with Mogk, who is of the opinion that a development of the constellation Hqðr—Baldr into Loki—Baldr took place between completion of Völuspá and the time of Snorri. But the supposedly older texts do not give a more heathen and authentic picture than Snorri's later works — which one might have been justified in expecting. One has to be satisfied with establishing the existence of two forms of variants: Baldr—Hqðr and Baldr—Loki and that, at the present time, it is not possible with the aid of the dates of the sources to find out whether Baldr—Hqðr is older than Baldr—Loki. There are parallels to these constellations of names, like Haeðcyn—Herebald and like Balor—

Lugh in the Irish Oedipus tale in early British literature. The diagram on p. 130 shows that the known texts cannot explain each other. Their internal similarities and dissimilarities show that many sources, unknown to us, have existed.

### 5 b. The Origin of the Net and the Capture of the Loki Salmon

The myth of *the origin of the net and the capture of the salmon* do not seem to fit very well into the cosmological concepts of the bound Loki, Ragnarøk and Utopia. The welding together of these motifs is not found in the other myths and must obviously be attributed to Snorri or his original source. The introduction to the Loki's punishment also suggests that a new narrative is about to begin.

Then said Gangleri: "Exceeding much Loki had brought to pass, when he had first been cause that Baldr was slain, and then that he was not redeemed out of Hel. Was any vengeance taken on him for this?" Hár answered: "This thing was repaid him in such wise that he shall remember it long . . ."

Then follows Hár's tale of how the gods anger was roused by Loki and how he ran away and hid himself on a mountain. There he build a house with four doors in order to have a view in all directions.

Often throughout the day he turned himself into the likeness of a salmon and hid himself in a place called Fránangr-Falls; then he would pounder what manner of wile the gods would devise to take him in the water-fall. But when he sat in the house, he took twine of linen and knitted meshes as a net is made since; but a fire burned before him. Then he saw that the Aesir were close upon him; and Óðinn had seen from Hlidskjálf where he was. He leapt up at once and out into the river, but cast the net into the fire.

When the Aesir had come to the house, he went in first who was the wisest of all, who is called Kvasir; and when he saw in the fire the white ash where the net had burned, then he perceived that that thing must be a device for catching fish and told it to the Aesir. Straightway they took hold, and made themselves a net after the pattern of the one which they perceived, by the burnt out ashes, that Loki

had made. When the net was ready, then the Aesir went to the river and cast the net into the fall; Þórr held one end of the net, and all of the Aesir held the other, and they drew the net. But Loki darted ahead and lay down between two stones; they drew the net over him, and perceived that something living was in front of it.<sup>95</sup>

This part of Snorri's narrative is an aetiological myth about the invention of the first fishing-net and the succeeding narrative is a continuation and a description of how the net was used.

A second time they went up to the fall and cast out the net, having bound it so something so heavy that nothing should be able to pass under it. Then Loki swam ahead of the net; but when he saw that it was but a short distance to the sea, then he jumped up over the net-rope and ran into the fall. Now the aesir saw where he went, and went up again to the fall and divided the company into two parts, but Þórr waded along in mid-stream; and so they went out towards the sea. Now Loki saw a choice of two courses; it was a mortal peril to dash out into the sea; but this was the second — to leap over the net again. So he did: he leapt as swiftly as he could over the netcord. Þórr clutched at him and got hold of him, and he slipped in Þórr's hand, so that the hand stopped at the tail; and for this reason the salmon has a tapering back.

After this follows the narrative of Loki's capture and fettering according to the Prometheus pattern but this episode has no relation to the myth of the first fishing net and its use. The capture of the Loki salmon is also loosely joined to the rest of the plot and the narrative differs considerably from Snorri's other sophisticated myths.

The contradictory feature of the myth — that Loki invents the net himself, the only means by which he can be caught, — indicates that the myth of the invention of the first net has been altered in order to fit into order of events. This net myth is in some way connected to the episode in the Andvari myth in which Loki borrows Rán's net to catch the pike and acquire his treasures. *Loki as the inventor of the net* and *Loki as the catcher of the fish*

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<sup>95</sup> Cf. The Fishing of Väinämöinen. Väinämöinen is transformed and passes under the net in the shape of an eel.

ought really to belong to the same context though now we find these episodes in two different myths. Here it can only be established that the myth of Loki as the inventor of the net and the using of the net is loosely joined to the Baldr myth. That Loki himself uses the net is evident in the Andvari myth where *Loki* catches the pike in Rán's net.

A narrative corresponding to the myth of the first net is found in the aetiological tales of Kalevala in the 26th rune.<sup>96</sup> Louhi has seized and carried off sun, moon and fire. Ukko therefore lights the spark of fire which is kept in a cradle and guarded by a virgin. The spark falls down and burns red marks on "the breast of the woman and the knees of the boy", finally it falls into the water and is swallowed by a fish.<sup>97</sup> After this comes a description of the *capture of the fish* and as an introduction to the narrative the *description of the making of the net* before the fishing. Krohn who has made an investigation of the runes concerning the catching of the fire and the fish and the related myth of the making of the net<sup>98</sup> quotes among many recorded versions also this:

Nachts wurde Hanf gesät, / wurde gesät und gepflügt, /  
im Mondschein wurde der Flachs gereinigt, / nachts brachte  
man ihn ins Wasser. / nachts wurde der Hanf geschwungen,  
/ wurde geschwungen, wurde gebrochen. / Die Brüder web-  
ten das Netz. / Fertig bekam man die Netze, / ins Wasser  
wurden die Netze gebracht, / (den Strom entlang warf man  
sie aus. / auch gegen den Strom). / Mit nichten fing man  
den Fisch, / wozu die Netze gefertigt, / wozu sie bereitet  
waren. / Man fing einen falben Hecht, / des Hechtes Magen  
schnitt man auf, / man fing einen glatten Schnepel, / des  
Schnepels Magen schnitt man auf, / man fing eine schmucke  
Plötze. / der Plötze Magen schnitt man auf, / (da war ein  
blaues Garnbündel, / das Garnbündel zertrennte man). /  
da fiel ein rotes Knäuel heraus, / das rote Knäuel löste man  
auf, / ein Feuerfunke stob hervor.<sup>99</sup>

<sup>96</sup> CASTRÉN, Kalevala p. 129 ff.

<sup>97</sup> v. SCHROEDER, op. cit. p. 67 ff. like MUCH, Der germanische Himmels-gott p. 57, regards Loki as a fire god.

<sup>98</sup> KROHN, Magische Ursprungsrunen der Finnen p. 106.

<sup>99</sup> Ib. p. 124. This variant also represents according to Krohn the simplest and most common form of the catching of the fire fish in Karelia.

Already Julius Krohn coupled Snorri's tale with the Finnish runes of the capture of the fire fish and stressed the similarities between them, thus, for example the motif of *the net in the ashes* and *the ashes which is spread on the fields* in order to make the flax grow better. Another similarity is the dragging of the net downstream and upstream. The myths teach us that one cannot catch the fish if the net is dragged in the wrong way.

The Finnish fire fish runes teach *how* to make the net and *how* to drag it. The fire fish rune probably belongs to a category of epic charms which are usually read in certain connections. Such are, for example, the epic charms against sickness which are read in connection with various ailments and tell of how someone falls prey to the sickness and of how it is dispelled and driven away to a place where it can no longer do any harm. These charms against sickness have their "Sitz im Leben" in connection with healing. The epic narrative of the charm is not only intended as entertainment but above all as a *magic charm* which because of its similar order of events will influence the course of the disease. These epic charms are thought to work through what research has termed sympathetic magic.

The function of the magic charms against sickness as well as their place in the life of man is completely clear. With the knowledge of the use of these charms in mind, it also seems likely that other *epic charms* have been used in suitable connections. Thus, for example, it seems probable that the myth of the net and the capture of the fire fish were read in connection with corresponding undertakings in which one was anxious to be successful — be they fire making, binding of nets or fishing.

The stories of the capture of the fish and the binding of the net on which the epic charms are based are origin — or explanation myths concerning the origin of fire and the making of the first net. In Snorri's Edda the characteristics of the aetiological myth are fully evident: Loki has invented the first net. The fact that the myth concerning the origin of the net take a different form in Snorri and the Finnish rune literature can be explained by the heterogeneous epic contexts in which they appear.

The connection between the Scandinavian net myth and the Finnish runes seems evident, as the name Louhi must correspond

to Loki. In this connection another similarity between Louhi and Loki ought to be emphasised: Loki is fettered while Louhi is threatened with fettering. *Ilmarinen forges the chains for Louhi in order to fetter her in Saariola* as a punishment for having stolen sun and moon<sup>100</sup> and Louhi then finds it wiser to return them. The theft of the sun and/or the moon does not, however, occur in Scandinavian literature<sup>101</sup> but is well known in North and East Asiatic and North American Indian tradition.<sup>102</sup>

The name Louhi is, however, missing in the runes quoted by Krohn concerning the capture of the fire and the salmon. Louhi has certain traits in common with the Loki figure in other formulas which suggests a connection with Scandinavian tradition (cf. p. 171 ff.). Whether the net myth have been borrowed from Finnish runic tradition to Swedish or, which seems more likely, was borrowed from Swedish to Finnish tradition cannot be determined with absolute certainty.<sup>103</sup> I think this is a problem for the specialists of Runic poetry to decide.

Therefore, we have to content ourselves for the moment by establishing that this capture- and net myth is a Scandinavian-Finnish aetiological myth concerning the origin of the net and its use, and that it can be placed in a group of ancient myths, which, along with the proper creation myths, explains the origin of the different trades and social institutions. This group of aetiological myths could be characterised as a form of primitive dogmatics which with the aid of explicatory epic representations have authorised and sanctioned the work and social conventions of profane life.<sup>104</sup>

<sup>100</sup> V. SCHROEDER, *Germanische Elben* p. 72 ff.

<sup>101</sup> *Völuspá* verse 25: 5—6 has been understood by some scholars as an allusion to the ravishing of the sun and the moon, but, as has been stressed above pp. 40, 152, it is likely to be a reference to the pestilence, the pollution of the air, which also occurs in the *Thebaid* with which *Völuspá* in parts shows correspondence.

<sup>102</sup> ROTH, *The Creation Myths* p. 505. Cf. also the tricking of the sun in *Nihongi* and *Kojiki*, op.cit.

<sup>103</sup> SETÄLÄ, *Aus dem Gebiet der Lehnbeziehungen* p. 210 ff.

<sup>104</sup> Side by side with these dogmatic explicatory myths there exists a large group of humorous explicatory legends or *aita*, many of which seem to be of great antiquity. The aetiological literature, however, is by no means an obsolete form of literature, it continues to offer suggestions and explanations.

*Summary*

It seems that, of the heterogeneous material of the Baldr myth the only authentic Loki traits are found in this net myth.

It is the only one of all the myth types in the Baldr story which

1. cannot be traced back to the contemporary literature or popular European patterns,
2. makes the Loki-figure the central character,
3. belongs to an ancient tradition because of its function, form and contents.

Of interest in this connection is the kenning for Loki in the beginning of Þórsdrápa "fellir fiðrnets" which according to Genzmer<sup>105</sup> can be interpreted as the one who "sets out the life nets of the gods." Here again is then a connection between Loki and the net.

For these reasons the net myth is the only myth which could reasonably be authentic with regard to the Scandinavian Loki figure. The rest of Snorri's Baldr myth is composed of international epic material which has been welded together with the net myth to a whole.

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<sup>105</sup> GENZMER, Die ersten Gesätze der Thorsdrapa p. 65 note 1. For the interpretation of "fiðr" see LINDQUIST, Oläst läst i äldre Västgöotalagen p. 12 ff.



## 11. LOKI AS THE FATHER OF MONSTERS

In the works of prose and poetry in the Eddas Loki is mentioned in kennings referring both to his pedigree and his progeny.

It seems, according to these obscure remarks, that Loki is the father of:

Fenrisúlfr <sup>1</sup>	Ynglingatal	Gylfaginning	Skáldskaparmál	Haustlång	Hyndluljóð
Miðgarðzormr		„	„	Þórsdrápa	Hymiskviða
Hel	„	„	„		

Only in Snorri are these references collected in an *epic* narrative of how through the intervention of the Father of All, the serpent is thrown into the sea and Hel into the ninth world to reign over it. In this narrative we are reminded of stories from the Bible: “The great dragon was cast out, . . . and his angels were cast out with him.” (Rev. 12.9); “. . . for the accuser of our brethren (Satan) is cast down, . . .” (Rev. 12.10); “In that day the Lord with his sore and great and strong sword . . . shall slay the dragon that is in the sea” (Isa. 27.1); “. . . I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.” (Lk. 10.18).

Snorri’s narrative is, however, not based directly on the Bible but on a *mediaeval learned commentary* of the stories in the Bible that are concerned with *the origin of monsters and of evil*. Snorri’s story of the origin of the monsters or demons should be seen in connection with the Mediaeval clerical tradition (see above p. 166) which has survived into this century. In modern popular tradi-

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<sup>1</sup> The capture of the Fenrisúlfr is a separate independent cosmological story which has been inserted into the plot. According to OLRÍK, Ragnarök p. 84 it is of East European origin.

tion we find information concerning the origin of the supernatural beings. The most usual type of legend in South Scandinavia explains that the supernatural beings are fallen angels. This corresponds to Snorri's information about the Midgard serpent being thrown into the sea and "Hel plunged down to Niflhel where she received power over the Ninth world<sup>2</sup> to distribute dwellings among those who were sent to her, namely, those who died of illness or old age". Niflhel as *the Ninth world* suggests a connection with Mediaeval learned cosmology.

According to another popular conception, the supernatural beings are "of Lucifer's race". Lucifer, the morning star, became during the Middle Ages a popular name for Satan.<sup>3</sup> This fact therefore suggests that a Mediaeval scholarly tradition is the basis for the recent popular recordings.

In the modern Swedish material there is a rich tradition concerning the origin of the supernatural beings which has been investigated by G. Granberg.<sup>4</sup> The most usual forms of story which Granberg quotes are:

1. Adam's first wife with her children were driven out by God.
2. Adam's wife Eve was ashamed to show God some of her children — these secreted children became the origin of all supernatural beings.<sup>5</sup>
3. The infernal beings are fallen angels.

The last-mentioned story has a very large distribution also outside Scandinavia<sup>6</sup> and Granberg describes it thus:

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<sup>2</sup> KROHN, *Skandinavisk mytologi* på 161. The division of the Universe into nine worlds is also known among the Shamanistic peoples, cf. PETERSSON, *Jabmek and Jabmeaimo* p. 173 ff. Cf. also MAJER, *Allgemeines Mythologisches Lexikon* p. 33 the conception of seven worlds and SEYMOUR, *The Seven Heavens in Irish Literature* p. 18 with a reference to apocryphal and Oriental literature.

<sup>3</sup> HASTINGS, *Dictionary of the Bible* 3 p. 159.

<sup>4</sup> GRANBERG, *Skogsrået* p. 164 ff., and map 17 which shows the distribution of the main types in Scandinavia.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. CHRISTIANSEN, *Norske Eventyr* p. 105. *Evas ulike børn*. (The different children of Eve.)

<sup>6</sup> Hdwb.d.A. 2 826 ff.

It is impossible to make a definite statement with regard to the antiquity of the legend and its former importance in Scandinavia without a thorough investigation of the legend as a whole, but much goes to show that it is originally a so-called priest or monk tradition. The people's own knowledge of the Bible and their own thoughts have, however, helped to preserve it.

In addition to these monk or priest traditions there are, according to Granberg, also purely *popular* explanations of the origin of the supernatural beings, thus, for example, the conceptions of the infernal beings as the *children of Cain* or the *sons of Korah*<sup>7</sup> are to be regarded as a popular individual explanation. Common to these as well as the above legends is that they are based on "stories from the Bible and that it seems to be a generally accepted view that the elemental beings are the descendants of the Devil".

The conception of Cain's children has been found, admittedly scantily, within a limited area — North Scandinavia — which seems to indicate that it is a question of a continuous myth tradition which has been preserved in a border area. The conception of Cain's children is indeed based on Christian dogmatics well-known in Mediaeval European tradition, even though it has its ultimate origin in pre-Christian Oriental conceptions.

### Lucifer and his Fallen Angels

Closely associated with the conception of the children of Cain is that of the fallen angels or demons.

The fall of Lucifer and his angels is mentioned, for example, in Lebor Gabála Éirenn, the Book of the Taking of Ireland p. 19, as is also, because of jealousy, his tempting Adam into the Fall. Lucifer's or Satan's fall also appears in Ælfric's Heptateuch,<sup>8</sup> in

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<sup>7</sup> The sons of Korah is evidently a reinterpretation of the Bible tradition of the sons of Korah the temple singers, who have here been popularly conceived as a name for the supernatural beings and descendants of Korah who were swallowed by the earth. (Num. 16.)

<sup>8</sup> This manuscript is dated to the early Eleventh Century. British Museum Cotton MS. Claudius B4. See text accompanying Plate 71 in *Palaeographical Society* 1—8.

Caedmon, in *Saltair na Rann* no. 6, in Peter Comestor's *Historia Scholastica* Ch. 21, in *Cursor Mundi* p. 33, in the German *Genesis* (ed. Dollmayr p. 3) as well as in the Russian chronicle of Nestor<sup>9</sup> and in Avitus' *De Peccato originali*. Jealousy, too, lies behind the devil's tempting of Adam and Eve in this latter account. The demons fall during many days, the time factor emphasising the distance between heaven and hell. In Caedmon's poem, for example, Satan fell during three days with his angels before he reached the bottom of the abyss, but in *Cursor Mundi* Lucifer fell forty miles a day for 7.700 years.

A counterpart to the concept of the fallen Lucifer or the devil and his host is also to be found in heathen tradition, for example in the myth of the children of Uranos in Hesiodos and Apollodoros, which Graves (*The Greek Myths* p. 37 ff.) and Staudacher (*Die Trennung von Himmel und Erde* p. 61 ff.) regard as being influenced by Semitic and/or Near Eastern tradition. The children of Uranos are expelled or eaten up or secreted because they are a failure. Some of these children are Cyclopes and Hundred-handed Ones, or, in other words, some kind of demons.

The motif of the expelled demons also occurs in Eastern tradition. In the conflict between Ahura Mazda and Angra Mainyu, the second and his demons are cast out and fall into the abyss.<sup>10</sup> Iblis will not glorify Allah and is therefore condemned until the Day of Judgement and becomes the captain of all devils. According to Landon the same legend also occurs in a Jewish tale in *The Book of Adam and Eve*.<sup>11</sup>

In the Christian Mediaeval tradition the motif of the expelled Lucifer or devil is closely associated with the motif of the fettered Lucifer or the devil who will be released from his chains at the end of the world (see p. 82).

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<sup>9</sup> *Nestorskrönikan* p. 111.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. also CARNOY, *Iranian Mythology* p. 277, the conflict of Amesha Spenta and Yazata and expulsion into darkness.

<sup>11</sup> LANDON, *Semitic Mythology* p. 355. GRÜNBAUM, *Neue Beiträge zur Semitischen Sagenkunde* p. 57, gives examples from Semitic and Syrian traditions. JUNG, has treated this subject in *Fallen Angels in Jewish, Christian, and Mohammedan Literature*.

### The Origin of the Monsters in Mediaeval Clerical Tradition

In *Beowulf* we read:

From him (Cain) are descended all the progeny of the  
monsters, giants and elves and monsters of the sea (*orcnē-  
ās*) as well as giants who fought against God.<sup>12</sup>

Thus Grendel, whom *Beowulf* fights, is of the race of Cain. Emerson and Klaeber<sup>13</sup> have commented on this verse and Carney has compared it with corresponding accounts of the origin of evil in *Sex Aetates Mundi*.<sup>14</sup> In this Irish text, preserved in manuscripts from the Eleventh and following Centuries, are related two different stories which are rendered here in Carney's translation:

A.

God commanded the posterity of Seth not to mix with the posterity of Cain and not to beget children with them and not to take wives from them. But the posterity of Seth transgressed that teaching and they took the maidens of the posterity of Cain, for their beauty was great, and they begot children with them in spite of the offence to God, so that thence sprung the monstrous creatures (*torothair*) of the world, giants and leprechauns (elves) and every monstrous illshapen form that people have had. Now when God saw them transgress his command he decided to destroy huma-

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<sup>12</sup> *Beowulf*, ed. Wrenn p. 98:    þanon untȳdras    ealle onwōcon  
   eotenas ond ylfe    ond orcnē-ās  
   swulce gīgantas    þā wið Gode wunnon

Wrenn (p. 280) translates *orcnē* by 'evil spirits of the dead'. In this context it seems to me that the solution put forward by Professor Nils Holmer is more probable: *orcnē* is the same word as that found in the Orkney Islands, Orkn-eyiar, the seal islands. *Orcnē-ās* must then refer to aquatic beings. To interpret *orcnē-ās* as marine creatures in these clerical traditions would correspond to the enumeration of mermaids in this context in the Book of Lecan. In the tale of the Swan Maiden — Aa 400 — we find in variants from the coastal regions bordering on the North Sea (above all in Scotland, Iceland, and the Færoes) cases of marriage with a *seal woman* (Cf. HOLMSTRÖM, *Svanjungfrumotivet* pp. 44, 84 ff.). Identification of a supernatural being with a seal is thus not remarkable.

<sup>13</sup> EMERSON, *Legends of Cain*, especially in Old and Middle English; KLAEBER, *Die christlichen Elemente im Beowulf* 2 p. 245 ff.

<sup>14</sup> CARNEY, *Studies in Irish Literature and History* p. 102 ff. See also *Lebor Gabála Éirenn* pp. 107, 137.

nity utterly, so that therefore the Flood was brought upon the world to destroy the posterity of Cain.

This second account given by Carney in *Studies* p. 103 is drawn from *Lebor na Huidre*.<sup>15</sup> It tells of the circumstances under which Noah cursed Ham, and continues:

So that therefore Ham is the first person cursed after the Flood and he is Cain's heir after the Flood and it is from him sprung leprechauns and giants and horseheads, and *every unshapely form* besides that people have. And it is on that account the descendants of Ham were destroyed, and their land was given to the children of Israel in token of the same curse. So therefore that is the origin of monsters (*torathair*) and they are not of the race of Cain as the Irish relate, for nothing remained of his seed after the Flood, for the reason of the Flood was to drown the posterity of Cain.

The names of the supernatural beings in the Anglo-Saxon and Irish texts about the origin of evil have been assembled by Carney in the following table; and he goes on to show that *Beowulf* and *Sex Aetates Mundi* both derive material from the chapter entitled *De Portentis* in Isidore of Seville's *Etymologiae*.

<i>Sex Aetates Mundi</i>	<i>Beowulf</i>	<i>Isidore of Seville Etymologiae</i>
torothair	untýdras	Lib. XI: iii: 2
fomoraig	eotenas ( <i>gigantae</i> )	Lib. XI: iii: 7
luchorpáin	ylfe	ib.
goborchind	orcneas	ib.

Isidore's work on demonology — which in its turn seeks inspiration from the earlier Fathers of the Church — as well as his writings on heresies came to have the greatest importance for the spiritual culture of all Europe<sup>16</sup> and he has been called a key figure in Mediaeval scholarship. One could go so far as to say that Isidore's teachings in a degenerate form lead ultimately to the elaborate belief in demons characteristic of the trials for witchcraft and the persecution of heretics.

<sup>15</sup> *Lebor na Huidre* p. 5.

<sup>16</sup> VEGA, S. *Isidori Hispalensis Episcopi Dei Haeresibus liber* p. 9 ff.

In addition to the Irish texts of *Sex Aetates Mundi* already mentioned, the same account appears in the *Book of Lecan* in a form of particular interest for a student of the Scandinavian material. Among the supernatural beings mentioned we find:

*luchrapanaich* (leprechauns), *fomoraich* (giants), *gabarchind* (horse-heads) *na haenchosaich* (the one-footed), *na guilbnig* ('the beaked folk'), *na torathair thruaga* ('the pitiful monsters'), *na troichig* (?), *na meidig cen chind* ('the necks without heads'), *na hegcaise thoratharrda* ('the monstrous forms'), *na murduchaind muridi* ('the sea mermaids'), *cach drong doigdealbda fil for dainib* ('every unshapely host amongst people').<sup>17</sup>

What is interesting, as Carney remarks, is the agreements between the three first orders of beings and the last group, which contains "every unshapely host among people", *Cach drong doigdealbda fil for dainib*, which corresponds to *cech ecosc dodelbda archena fil for doinib* in *Lebor na Huidre* and *cech n-ecosc torothorda ndodelbda ro bui for doinib* in *Sex Aetates Mundi* referred to by Carney p. 103 note 1.

In a poem which Carney assigns to the close of the Eleventh Century, it is told of Ham:

His famous father cursed the son called Ham so that he — he excelled in perversity — is the Cain of the people after the Flood. From him with valour sprung horse-heads and giants, the line of maritime leprechauns, and every unshapely person; those of the two heads — it was a crime — and the two bodies in union, the dun-coloured one-footed folk, and the merry blue (or 'black') beaked people. Every person in the east without a head, going from glen to glen, and his white mouth protruding from his breast, he is of the posterity of Ham.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>17</sup> CARNEY, *Studies in Irish Literature and History* p. 108.

<sup>18</sup> CARNEY, *op. cit.* p. 109 ff. A concept that Ham, as a punishment received the *black colour of his skin* and became the ancestor of Cus and "the Hammites", is also found in the Jewish tradition. Cf. also EISENMENGER, *Entdecktes Judenthum* p. 448. Genesis Ch. 10, Noah's son's relationship: cf. also *SU*: Ham col. 775. This tradition also appears in the introduction to the *Chronicle of Nestor*. JORDANES on the other hand begins his account with a description of the three continents and says nothing of the three ancestors. Cf. also CAEDMON p. 64. In *Lebor na Huidre* p. 1 it is related that Noah's son Cam became the ancestor of the peoples of Africa.

The Irish texts show that after the enumeration of supernatural beings follow *abnormal* or *deformed human beings*. In this context of the origin of evil the concept of monsters and demons extends easily into that of monsters in the sense of deformed, misshapen people who on account of sickness differ from the normal. Hence the transition from monsters and demons to hypostases of illnesses or malformation or defects is also obvious. Cain becomes the father, not only of monsters, but also of all defective and deformed creatures. This line of thought turns up once more in the Scandinavian material. Grattan and Singer have collected some material in *Anglo-Saxon Magic and Medicine* p. 50 ff. which shows that the demons were regarded as the bringers of sickness. They sent their illnesses which, like arrows, struck down men. This appears, after all, from names for diseases such as Elfshot, Hexenschuss, Alveskudt, Älvablåst and "skott" (shots) (Cf. below p. 172).

In much the same way *illnesses* are often *personified* in the charms against them. Men addressed the sickness direct as a living creature: Thou vile pus and gout, rose and ache and all nine kinds of toothache, now seated here, I slay thee and expel thee and consign thee to Hell, where all evil things must abide . . .

The detailed descriptions of deformed and misshapen creatures rendered by Isidore and his imitators are his and their contemporary counterparts to Bosch's and Brueghel's later representations of devils. The whole company of demons has thus been painted in words and pictures.

Of special interest to this investigation is the enumeration of the monsters and abnormal creatures, descendants of Cain (Adam and Ham), who can be compared with Loki's progeny in the following way:

<i>The origin of evil:</i>	<i>Supernatural beings:</i>	<i>Illnesses or abnormalities:</i>
Cain father of:	Monsters, aquatic being, giants and elves	horse-heads <sup>19</sup> and cripples
Loki    „    „ :	The Fenrisúlfr, the Miðgarðzormr, Hel	
„ brother „ :		Býleistr, Helblindi

<sup>19</sup> Corresponds to Isidore's *Etymologiae* Liber XI: iii: 7; Alii a magnitudine partium, veluti capite informi. Cf. Carney, p. 106.



The Fenrisúlfr and the Miðgarðzormr correspond to the monsters, while Býleistr (Lame) and Helblindi (Blind) correspond to *cripples* and *misshapen creatures*. Hel's colour — her body being partly blue — and her terrible countenance remind us of the blue people and their frightful appearances as described by Isidore and the later scholastics.

The name itself, Miðgarðzormr, suggests origin from learned Mediaeval tradition. Miðgarð corresponds to the A.-S. middan-eard (-geard) and Latin Media terrae which according to Krohn is the middle world where Men live.<sup>20</sup> The serpent which coils round Miðgarð is also according to Krohn identical with Leviathan, because in an Icelandic Homilia Miðgarðzormr stands as glossa for Leviathan: "Like the Midgard serpent Leviathan is described by the Anglo-Saxon poet Bede from the Eighth Century as coiling round the earth and biting his tail. The fishing and catching of the Midgard serpent by Þórr is explained from the Mediaeval concept that God our Father or Christ had caught Leviathan (the devil) on a fishing hook (the cross)."<sup>21</sup>

It is interesting that also Snorri says of Hel that she received power over the Ninth world, Niflhem, there to distribute dwellings among those who were sent to her, namely, those who die of *illness* or old age. Hel's connection with people who had died of sickness possibly suggests that the enumeration of the beasts and monsters includes also the illnesses together with impediments such as paralysis and blindness.

That this was the case is indicated clearly enough by the names Býleistr and Helblindi. These underlying substances or personifications of deformity and ill-health Býleistr and Helblindi, have, however, been depicted by the mythographer as Loki's brothers, not his sons. The name Býleistr corresponds to na haenchosaich (*the one-legged* or *one-footed*) and in Isidore to Sciopodum gens fertur in Aethiopia *singulis cruribus et celeritate mirabili* . . . or as we find it expressed in the German version of Isidore: Etlicher het einen fûz, . . . damite liuf er so balde . . .<sup>22</sup> The combination

<sup>20</sup> KROHN, Skandinavisk mytologi p. 7.

<sup>21</sup> ib. p. 157.

<sup>22</sup> *Die altdeutsche Genesis* p. 37. Apropos the Noah episode in the Old German Genesis, SCHERER in his Geistliche Poeten der Kaiserzeit p. 19 has inter-

of *monsters* (Fenrisúlfr, Miðgarðzormr) and *cripples* (Býleistr and Helblindi i.e. Lamé and Blind) shows that Snorri must have been familiar with the tradition found in Beowulf, Sex Aetates Mundi in the Irish texts referred to above, all of which are derived from Isidore's enumeration of the origins of Evil.

The same Scandinavian clerical tradition is preserved also in a number of Finnish magic charms.

### *The Finnish Tradition of Louhi*

Louhi or Loviatar can be reckoned as the female equivalent of Loki in the Finnish tradition. She is the mother in various Finnish runes of various *dangerous animals* as well as of several *diseases*, just as Loki is the father of various demons. Loviatar's family tree shows certain similarities to that of Loki, in that Loviatar is identical with Lauvey — Loki's mother, and Äimätär is identical with Nál another name for Loki's mother. Further-

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preted the description of Cain's children as evidence of *ethnographical interest* on the part of one of the authors. The same ethnographical interest, in his opinion, is characteristic of Adam of Bremen who tells of fabulous beings such as dog-heads, human beings whose heads protrude from their breasts, who jump on one foot or are covered by their ears. In this description of the children of Cain we recognise Isidore's enumeration of the monsters in the chapter entitled De portentis in the Etymologiae. The devils or monsters are sometimes interpreted as *fallen angels* in the Underworld or as *supernatural beings* who spend part of their existence in forests and oceans, sometimes as a "*people*" in distant lands — hence Scherer's interpretation of the description as evidencing ethnographical interest — sometimes as a primitive race or as the first human beings.

In another context we have seen the connection between the European Christian and Pagan, Near Eastern traditions in respect of the fallen angels as well as of the fettered devil. Even in regard to the description of Cain's children we have a counterpart in the description of the demons in Oriental tradition. Thus, in Iranian Mythology p. 298, CARNOY enumerates as follows: "Besides the fifteen races issued from the lineage of Frahvāh, son of Sīyāmāh, there are ten varieties of mythical men, grown on the tree from which Māshya and Māshyōi were detached, these being such as these of the earth, of the water, the breast-eared, the breast-eyed, the one-legged, these also who have wings like a bat, those of the forest with tails and who have hair on the body."

Like Mother Earth and Uranous, these first primitive parents *devour* their first children before giving birth to new progeny.

more, the names of Loki's brothers, Býleistr and Helblindi, correspond to the names of the sons of Loviatar, Ruho, Rampa and Perisokea.

<i>Loki</i> is the father of:	<i>Louhi</i> ( <i>Loviatar</i> ) is the mother of:
The Miðgarðzormr	(serpent)
The Fenrisúlfr	the wolf
Hel	
	the dog
Býleistr (Lame)	Ruho (Cripple)
	Rampa (Lame)
Helblindi (Blind)	Perisokea (Blind)

These names of illnesses in certain epic charms have been compared by Setälä<sup>22</sup> with the Loki-Baldr myth: Loki and the blind Hqðr shoot Baldr in the same way as the Cripple, Lame and Blind shoot the arrows that penetrate the innocent human being in the forms of illnesses. The name “*skott*” (shooting pain) found in various sudden diseases points back to ideas of illnesses being caused by arrows shot by demons of ill-health or malignantly disposed people. The charm against illness quoted by Setälä ought not, however, to be torn out of its context but seen against other epic charms against sickness, read in order to describe how it has come about and how it is driven out. In the compilation made by Krohn of the Finnish charms against sickness concerning the origin of illnesses<sup>23</sup> the names Ruho, Rampa, Perisokea play an important part as the demons who shoot arrows, in other words, diseases.

In Snorri the names given to the members of Loki's family indicate that we are concerned with monsters and *demons*, *personifying various* illnesses or defects. The magical charms found in the Finnish rune songs also indicate that the names in this myth of the origin of evil refer to *demons of ill-health* or personification of defects and abnormalities, *not to divine personages*.

<sup>22</sup> SETÄLÄ, Aus dem Gebiet der Lehnbeziehungen p. 210 ff. Cf. also OLRİK, Lukki, Louviatar i finska Trylleformler p. 95 ff. Lektor Vilksuna has drawn my attention to two works by HONKO, which have been published since this was written: Krankheitsprojekte p. 128 ff., and Sokea tappaja p. 56.

<sup>23</sup> KROHN, Magische Ursprungsrunen der Finnen p. 155 ff.

**Survey of the Narratives of the Genesis of the Monsters,  
or the Source of Evil**

<i>Clerical Tradition</i> (Isidore of Seville, <i>Sex Aetates mundi</i> , <i>Beowulf</i> )	<i>Old Norse Tradition</i>	<i>Finnish Runic Poetry</i>
Cain father of monsters abnormalities and impediments	Loki father (brother) of monsters (Hel) Helblindi Býleistr	Louhi mother of dangerous animals Ruho and Rampa and Perisokea

Carney has been frequently quoted, since his work on the Mediaeval British tradition is very necessary for the understanding of the narrative of Loki as the source of evil. While these observations on Loki's "evil" character has been thoroughly discussed by scholars, I have preferred to show that the prototypes for Snorri's narrative are to be found in the learned Mediaeval tradition, that Snorri's narrative is a variant of that tradition and that Loki has subsequently been brought into the narrative instead of Cain (Adam or Ham). These narratives and kennings ought not, therefore, to be regarded as authentic heathen characteristics applicable to Loki.

How Loki's parents Fárbaumi, Laufey or Nál are to be interpreted is very uncertain. Considering that they are involved in the origin of Evil, they should perhaps be classified as some kind of demons of sickness: Fárbaumi, pushing hard, which is considered to mean the wind, may well be concerned with the wind as the cause of illnesses. In popular belief until quite recently whirlwinds were thought to be a source of sickness. Nál (needle) could be a possible cause of *stitch*, just as the arrow causes a *shooting pain*. For Laufey I have been unable to discover any really satisfactory explanation. Whether Laufey can be identified with "lövjerska", a woman who fiddles with medicines and herbs, seems uncertain.<sup>24</sup>

In Snorri we find Narvi also mentioned as the son of Loki. He has been derived, however, from an entirely different constellation of names: Sigyn—Ali/Váli—Narvi, Loki's family in the Baldr

<sup>24</sup> Cf. KROHN, *Skandinavisk mytologi* p. 163.

myth. In Snorri's syncretistic narrative these two "Loki-families" have been taken from two quite different myths and joined together by a systematic mythographer. The two independent families are accounted for by the statement that Loki's offspring in one case had the giantess Angrboða as mother.

It should be noted that Snorri does not mention Váli in his enumeration of Loki's children. Is it because he was familiar with two different traditions that he was unable to weave together? According to one of these, Váli was the son of the valkyrie Rind (as in *Völuspá* 34) and her son by Óðinn. According to the other tradition, he is referred to as son of Loki, namely in *Skáldskaparmál* 15 (Snorra Edda ed. Þ. Jónsson).

It should also be noted that Snorri makes no mention of Sleipnir among Loki's progeny. Since Snorri knew and related the myth of Loki who gives birth to Sleipnir but has not commented on the relationship in this context, it seems probable that neither he nor any contemporary mythographer interpreted this story except as a humorous sequel to the Masterbuilder's legend of the mare who lures the stallion from his labour, thereby preventing the completion of the work by the appointed hour.

That Snorri's myth of the origin of evil has been influenced by Mediaeval clerical tradition is perhaps not really remarkable; after all, it is a question of relatively late transcriptions. But since Loki is referred to as father of the (Fenris) wolf in *Haustlong* and as father of the Midgardserpent in *Þórsdrápa*, this means that this narrative of Loki was familiar to these early mythographers, whose works usually are dated to the Ninth or Tenth Century respectively Eleventh Century. The cryptic expressions or kennings must, at the time they were written down, have reflected for their audience or at least for the mythographers well known traditions.

The kennings indicate therefore, if these dates are correct, that the narrative of the origin of Evil was known as early as the Ninth or Tenth Century and that, in consequence, the clerical Western European tradition had even then already exercised influence on the Old Norse culture of the time.

It means that the author of *Haustlong* was familiar with *the clerical Mediaeval tradition*, adapted to suit the Old Norse heathen

tradition. Furthermore, the author of *Haustlong* was familiar with the Irish version of the Classical tale of the Apples of the Hesperides (see above p. 17), which in its turn had been modified to comply with the requirements of the author's intention to describe the Old Norse pagan world.

Hence it follows that *Haustlong* cannot be regarded as representative of a pure heathen theology. If de Vries' theory is to be accepted (cf. p. 5 ff.), the *most ancient* texts must represent the heathen Old Norse tradition. This, however, does not hold good in the case of the supposedly old texts of *Haustlong* or *Þórsdrápa*, which are both considered to be the earliest texts. The second of these must be derived from the Mediaeval Irish novelle, as has been shown in the chapter on the Geirrøðr myth.

### *Summary*

This investigation shows that the story of Loki as *the father of the monsters* is influenced by Mediaeval learned tradition. This concept of Loki cannot therefore be regarded as an authentic trait of the original Loki figure. The brothers of Loki may be explained as names for hypostases of illnesses or impediments.

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<sup>25</sup> The dating of these poems might be discussed from the problems arising: Was the Old Norse poet of *Haustlong* influenced by clerical or literary Western European tradition already in the Ninth or Tenth Century, or does the knowledge of this clerical tradition imply that the poems should be considered to be of a later date than is usually suggested?

## 12. LOKASENNA

### Notes on the Motifs in Lokasenna

#### Survey of the Motifs in Lokasenna

Lokasenna

Snorri Skáldskaparmál

Chapter 34 \*

*Introduction in prose: —*

At Aegir's feast all the gods except Þórr =  
were present.

Aegir ordered gold to be brought  
into the hall instead of fire to  
illuminate it.

Loki did not bear to hear the aesir praise  
Aegir's servants Fímafeng and Eldir.

Loki slew Fímafeng. The aesir chased  
Loki to the woods, as the place was  
invulnerable.

Loki sent all the asagods there  
and killed Aegir's thrall, whose  
name was Fímafeng. Another  
thrall was named Eldir.

(Here follows a description of  
Aegir's family and treasures.)

*Poetic part: —*

Loki returns and talks with Eldir.

Stanzas 1—5: — Eldir warns Loki not to  
go in to the aesir.

Loki goes into the hall.

Stanzas 6—10: — Loki asks to be allowed  
to join in the feast and appeals to Óðinn

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\* Snorra Edda ed. Þ. Jónsson.

to remember their sworn brotherhood and his promise not to drink without Loki. Loki abuses all except Bragi. The enumeration of the shortcomings and offences of the aesir begins. Loki only stops when Þórr arrives and threatens him with his hammer. (Stanzas 12—64.)

Stanza 65 ends with Loki's statement that all the property of Aegir will be consumed by fire, which comes true.

Then the aesir became aware that Rán had a net with which she caught men that were at sea.

*Conclusion in prose: —*

Thereupon Loki hid himself in the guise of a salmon in the rapid of Fránangr where the aesir took him. Loki was tied with the bowels of his son Nari, while Narfi was transformed into a wolf. Skaði fastened a snake above him which dripped its venom. Sigyn held a bowl under the snake but when she had to empty it Loki writhed, and then there was an earthquake.

### The Poetic Part of Lokasenna

Lokasenna consists, as we know, of two parts — the main poem, and the prose passages which conclude and open it.<sup>1</sup>

The poem gives Loki the opportunity to lash all the other Asa gods by enumerating and ridiculing all their feats. The author has availed himself of every opportunity to display the faults and flaws of the Asa gods. The description of the Asa gods in Lokasenna is reminiscent of the satirical poems of Lucian, where Lucian alludes to myths known by the reader and uses them to expose the deficiencies of the gods.<sup>2</sup> Among the translations available to me,<sup>3</sup> I have not been able to find a poem by Lucian which

<sup>1</sup> v. HAMEL, *The Prose-frame of Lokasenna* p. 204.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. HIRSCHFELD, *Untersuchungen zur Lokasenna* p. 58 ff.

<sup>3</sup> LUKIANOS, *Valda skrifter från Grekiskan av H. Hult*; LUKIANOS, *Gudesamtaler, Samtaler i havet, Menippo's rejse til underverdenen samt Timon eller Menneskehaderen* translated by M. C. Gertz.



could be a direct prototype. The similarities to the works of Lucian is limited to the choice of subject-matter, the myths, and the satirical style.

Kaarle Krohn has brought into the discussion some interesting material which is closely connected with Lokasenna, the poem about Hans Pfriem published by Hayneccius in 1582, which are here given in a short version by Krohn.<sup>4</sup>

A perpetually quarrelsome carter by the name given in the title managed to get into Heaven unnoticed and is allowed to remain on condition that he does not make a nuisance of himself. As he cannot stop being difficult, the Saints try to admonish him. First he is spoken to by Mary Magdalene, but he replies with abuse and hints at her former impurity. Humbly she acknowledges her sins, although she has both repented them and been granted absolution, and explains: "What we may have been in the past is no longer of significance to us, let us rather pay regard to what we now are." Then appears the huckster Zacchaeus who summons the carter to trial; when the latter reproaches him for his past, he does not even dare to get angry, but swallows the insult as a bitter pill. Then comes Paul with friendly talk and Peter with severe admonitions, yet without any other result than that they, also, have to retire, accused by the carter, one of having persecuted the congregation of Christ, the other of having denied Our Lord. Now Moses approaches, the carter thinks he is hearing thunder and gets frightened. But he collects himself in time, and before Moses starts talking about the throwing down to Hell with the aid of a thunder-clap, he reminds him of his infidelity and its consequences. Finally, Moses calls the innocent children to help him, but they reach out for the fruits and sweets which are offered to them from the carter's pocket.

The story of Hans Pfriem is also known from one of Luther's table conversations from 1536. Krohn points out, however, that this type of story has been used already before the Reformation and its ridicule of the cult of saints. The satirical legend is, in fact, known already in the French *fablieaux* literature through a manuscript from the Thirteenth Century.

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<sup>4</sup> KROHN, Skandinavisk mytologi p. 143 ff. BP 3 no. 178, Meister Pfriem p. 297.

Many scholars have been of the opinion that Lokasenna has been written at a time when the heathen gods had ceased to be revered.<sup>5</sup> Hirschfeld thinks that it has been written in order to break down the existing religion.<sup>6</sup> These suppositions do not seem unlikely, but the satirical representation of the saints or the gods does not necessarily indicate that the official faith is being undermined. The examples only show that side by side with piety and orthodox faith occur scepticism, irreverence and jest.

The paragraphs in Lokasenna allude to various myths which are well-known in Old Norse literature. There are, however, a few exceptions. The paragraphs referring to, for example, the foster-brotherhood of Loki and Óðinn and the dispute between Loki and Sif cannot be explained from the Old Norse myths we know.<sup>7</sup> It can here be a question of myths that have been lost. But it can also be the case, as Krohn points out in connection with the foster-brotherhood of Óðinn and Loki, that the characters of certain saints have been substituted by Óðinn and Loki, because "the humble confessions of the saints regarding their sins on earth, illuminates and explains the moderation — unusual for Old Norse gods — of their replies to Loki's ruthless accusations".<sup>8</sup> The foster-brother relationship between Óðinn and Loki, which is unknown in other connections, could according to Bugge be interpreted to the effect that during the Middle Ages Loki was identified with Lucifer who, according to clerical tradition, was nearest to the Father as prince of all the angels, but because of his pride was flung out of Heaven.<sup>9</sup>

As far as this survey is concerned, it is sufficient — in spite of the interpretations suggested above — to establish that as the information about Óðinn's and Loki's foster-brotherhood is not

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<sup>5</sup> Cf. DE VRIES, *The Problem of Loki* p. 178 f. MAURER, *Die Bekehrung des norwegischen Stammes* 1 pp. 158, 160, 163; *ib.* 2 pp. 247, 316 ff.

<sup>6</sup> HIRSCHFELD, *Untersuchungen zur Lokasenna* pp. 1, 53.

<sup>7</sup> *ib.* p. 55 ff.

<sup>8</sup> KROHN, *Skandinavisk mytologi* p. 143 ff.

<sup>9</sup> BUGGE, *Studier* 1 p. 76. *Cursor Mundi* p. 32—36, 438 ff. *Homilies of Aelfric* p. 10. CAEDMON (ed. Bouterwek) 1 p. cxlvii. (Cf. also p. 84.) *Die altdeutsche Genesis* p. 2. Cf. also THORNDIKE, *History of Magic* 2 p. 136 which quotes Hildegard of Bingen. THORNDIKE, *op. cit.* 1 p. 340 is of the opinion that the motif goes back to pre-Christian tradition.

to be found in the Old Norse myths or in any other connections, it must, for the time being be regarded as authentic information concerning the Loki figure.

The information concerning Sif and Loki is also without a known equivalent. Neither is it possible to establish whether it could refer to the myth of Sif's hair that Loki cuts off. The information is too vague to enable an identification with any other tradition.

### **The Prose Sections of Lokasenna**

The prose passages which surround the poetic part of Lokasenna has been treated in great detail by v. Hamel.<sup>10</sup> According to v. Hamel, Aegir's feast implies that the gods were gathered soon after Baldr's death in order to plan their revenge on Loki. de Vries has well refuted Hamel's statement and pointed out that the myths are not co-ordinated, and for that reason they can not be arranged in a definite chronological order. It is also worth pointing out that Loki does not play this part in all Baldr myths, but only in Snorri's tradition.

The fact that the introductory and concluding prose passages are closely related has already been noted by Golther, Jessen and Hirschfeld. The prose passages show a certain similarity to Snorri's Baldr myth. The slaying of Baldr corresponds to the killing of the thrall Fímafeng. In both variants Loki flees to the woods and lives as a salmon in the rapids, until he is caught by the Asa gods and bound with his son's intestines. In both variants Sigyn protects him by holding the bowl and collecting the venom which drips down on him, but when she empties the bowl he shakes in his fetters so that the Earth quakes.

In the Baldr myth Loki is the inventor of the net with the aid of which he is caught himself. Lokasenna only mentions the fact that he is caught, nothing about the net. It is possible that Snorri's confused and obviously fragmentary account in *Skáldskaparmál* 34<sup>11</sup> indicates that also Lokasenna was familiar with the capture

<sup>10</sup> v. HAMEL, *The Prose-frame of Lokasenna*.

<sup>11</sup> *Snorra Edda*, ed. Þ. Jónsson p. 112.

of Loki with a net. In this account Snorri describes Aegir's feast, his magnificent hall, his thralls Eldir and Fímafeng and the killing of Fímafeng by Loki. The killing — its consequences and possible punishment is not dealt with further by Snorri. Instead the story goes on to tell that Aegir had nine daughters and that his wife Rán had a net with the aid of which she caught those who were at sea. It is true that Rán's net can be said to fit naturally into the context, but it might be more than a coincidence that the net is mentioned here. Even if Snorri had known the same tradition as Lokasenna, he could hardly have used the motif of the capture of Loki with a net, chaining to rocks etc. as he himself uses this motif in his account of the slaying of Baldr.<sup>12</sup>

Regarding the prose passages of Lokasenna reference can be made to the work by v. Hamel, mentioned above, and de Vries' criticism of that work.<sup>13</sup> In this survey it is enough to correlate Lokasenna's episode of the fettered Loki with the Baldr myth Part 5 and with the myth of Loki's<sup>14</sup> capture and punishment in the Chapter of Sif's hair and the treasures of the Asa gods. These myths have been treated above on pp. 149 ff. and 45 ff.

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<sup>12</sup> GOLTHER, *Handbuch der germanischen Mythologie* p. 421 note 2.

<sup>13</sup> HIRSCHFELD, *Untersuchungen zur Lokasenna* pp. 11, 32.

<sup>14</sup> DE VRIES, *The Problem of Loki* p. 171 ff.

## SUMMARY OF THE ANALYSIS OF THE MOTIFS

For purely methodical reasons it has seemed necessary to me here to go through all the Scandinavian material concerning Loki in order to determine which myths also exist outside Scandinavia, and thus belong to a more or less common European tradition, and which are only Scandinavian. Which myths *can* be typical of just Loki should be determined primarily by this sifting of the material. Otherwise the scholar can select out of the abundant, supposedly original Scandinavian material just those myths and motifs which support his own theory. This is actually what has happened when scholars have arrived at such different conclusions as that Loki is: a) a fire demon, b) a water spirit, c) a demon of cold and darkness, d) a trickster figure and/or a religious idea, e) that the myth is a ritual drama of the seasons.

Here, Ethnology can be of assistance in solving the religious-historical problem behind the Loki figure. From a critical examination of the sources of the Scandinavian material — not to be confused in this context with a similar examination of the texts and sources from a linguistic point of view — in order to establish which types of myths are limited only to the Scandinavian region, and which are found outside of it, we get a less subjective starting-point for a further investigation. The separation of international and Scandinavian material is the first condition for getting the material which can have any relevance to the Loki figure. The survey and discussion of the myth material concerning Loki in this book has aimed at making this clear. The results of this investigation can be summarised as follows:

1. *The Þjazi myth* does not contain authentic Loki traits, as it is a variant of the Classical tale of the Apples of the Hesperides. It is most closely related to the Irish tale of the Sons of Turen, the Irish version of the Classical tale of Hercules and the Apples of the Hesperides.
2. *Reginsmál and the Andvari myth* contain material which can be found both in the Niebelungensaga and in Historia Francorum. One episode of this myth does not seem to be based on a foreign model — namely, the episode of Loki borrowing Rán's net and catching the pike. This motif could thus show an authentic Loki trait.
3. *The Ásgarðr myth* is a variant of the traditional "Master-builder" legend which has a Eurasian distribution. Further, the Ásgarðr myth can be established as belonging to the West European form of the Masterbuilders legends, with the horse or ox as an assistant. The device — Loki turning himself into a mare to lure the stallion away from his building work — is unique. The humorous denouement of the plot — Loki gives birth to Sleipnir — could be explained by the preceding course of events. Possibly, the transformation into a mare and the foaling of Sleipnir can be regarded as authentic Loki traits.
4. *Sif's Hair and the Treasures of the Asa Gods*. This bizarre myth does not seem to have any direct European parallels. Thus, it *can* be a representative of Scandinavian tradition and contain traits characteristic of Loki. This variant has probably borrowed only one single motif, i.e. *the winged shoes* from the Classical tradition. The motifs of Loki turning himself into an insect, travelling "lopt ok log", his volubility, the punishment of having his lips sewn together — all these can for the moment be regarded as possible authentic Loki traits.
5. *Sqrlapáttir* is a variant of the tale of the jewel and its curse which has been adapted to Scandinavian mythology. It is true that Sqrlapáttir has been assigned to the Fourteenth Century, but the reference to Loki's theft of *Brísings girði* in Haustlong indicates that the myth was known by the

author of *Haustlong*. If the date of *Haustlong* is rightly assigned to the Ninth or Tenth Centuries, this would mean that the myth was already known by that time and had become part of Scandinavian mythology. Disregarding the case of this dating, it is important to be able to establish that *Sqrlapáttir* is a very much reconstructed variant of the *Ermanarík* saga such as we know it in the Mediaeval tradition of *Jordanes*, *Beowulf*, *Snorri* and *Saxo*.

6. *The Fetching of the Hammer or Þrymskviða* is a variant of Aa 1148 B, a myth about the stolen thunder implement, known in East Europe and Scandinavia. It is found in Estonia and among the Finns and the Lapps, through *Þrymskviða* and folksong variants it has also been known in Scandinavia. *Loki* does here take the part of a messenger. Neither does this myth show any constitutive *Loki* traits except possibly for the motif of the servant of the thunder god. This motif recurs also in the *Journey to Útgarðr* and the *Geirrøðr* myth where it might be of significance.
7. *The Askr and Embla myth* is a variant of the tale of the three creators who together create man, and who are here identified with Óðinn, Lóðurr and Hœnir.
8. *The Geirrøðr myth and Þórsdrápa* can be traced back to *Táin Bó Fraich* and thus cannot be an authentic *Loki* myth.
9. *The Útgarðr myth*. The visit to *Útgarðr* is based partly on a Mediaeval religious legend, also known in European tradition, partly on an allegorical representation, foreign to Scandinavian tradition but well known in the Irish tradition of *Finn*. It is here a question of foreign — to be explicit, Irish — material which has been attributed to Scandinavian gods, and any traits constitutive of *Loki* cannot therefore be found.

In *Saxo's* account *Útgarðaloki* is identical with the fettered devil of Mediaeval Christian tradition and thus indirectly connected with the motif of the bound *Loki* in the *Baldr* myth, *Völuspá* and *Lokasenna*. The influence of Christian tradition can also be traced in the concept of the bound *Loki* in these myths.

10. *The Baldr myth*, a conglomerate of international material, in Snorri is composed of the following parts.

*Part 1—2* consist of the Oedipus tale with motifs borrowed from the Christian Passion. The Oedipus tale (type Aa 931) shows a kinship to the British tradition of Aa 931, which, in its turn, is closely related to the Classical tale of the destruction of Thebes. The story of Fergus' death (Aided Fergusa) shows close correspondence as regards the motif of the blind slayer.

*Part 3* is a description of a funeral procession but as Loki is not mentioned in it this part is not very important for this investigation.

*Part 4* is a variant of the Orpheus tale. Like in the Thebaid, a journey to the Underworld follows the story of Oedipus and the fraternal tragedy.

*Part 5 a* is a myth of the fettered monster, a cosmological myth of the Enemy of the World who is to be released at the End of the World. As already Olrik has shown, it is a variant of an originally East European-Near Eastern type of myth. The models for the Old Norse myth are found both in biblical and Christian Mediaeval tradition as well as in the Classical myth of Prometheus with which the Scandinavian myth is closely related. This, supposedly, Scandinavian myth is a mixture of Classical and clerical material.

*Part 5 b* contains a myth of the capture of the Loki salmon and an aetiological myth of the origin of the net to which there are no parallels in European tradition. The net myth and Loki as the inventor of the net is the only part of the heterogeneous material of the Baldr myth which could be authentic of Loki.

11. *Loki as the Father of Monsters*. This myth of Snorri's is to be referred to Mediaeval clerical tradition as expounded by Isidore of Seville. The work of Isidore has been known indirectly also to the Scandinavian mythographers who have written *Haustlong* and *Þórsdrápa*, which is evident from the kennings in *Haustlong* and *Þórsdrápa* about Loki as the father of the Fenrisúlfr and the Miðgarðzormr.



12. *Lokasenna*. The poetical part of Lokasenna has its closest equivalent in the Mediaeval satiric legend-poetry, a genre used even by Lucian. A couple of motifs in Lokasenna, e.g. Óðinn's and Loki's sworn brotherhood and Loki's and Sif's alliance, have no known parallels. The notices are too vague to admit an identification with other known tales. On that account the reference to the sworn brotherhood of Óðinn and Loki may for the time being be considered a possible authentic trait.

To the motifs in the prose parts of Lokasenna there certainly are parallels in the Scandinavian mythology but none outside Scandinavia. The terminating prose part of Lokasenna is identical with part 5 of the Baldr myth. The beginning prose part coincides with the Baldr myth only in the fact that Loki proves a slayer, even if the slaying is differently carried out in the Baldr myth. The prose parts, however, can only be discussed in connection with part 5 of the Baldr myth which is a variant of the same tale.

Models of all these myths have been proved to exist, except for the myth of *Sif's hair and the treasures of the Asa gods*. A subtraction of the Old Norse Loki myths with well-known international material gives the following sum of myths and motifs which can contain constitutive Loki traits:

*Reginismál and the Andvari myth*: Loki catches the pike in Rán's net.

*The Ásgarðr myth*: Loki turns himself into a horse.

*Sif's hair and the treasures of the Asa gods*: Loki can turn himself into an insect and travel "lopt ok lög". The volubility, the capture of Loki, the sewing together of the lips can also be authentic motifs.

*Sqrlapátttr*: Loki turns himself into a flea and fly (into a seal in Husdrápa).

*The myth of the fetching of the hammer*: Loki, the companion of the thunder god, a trait which has its natural epic explanation in this myth, but not in the Geirrøðr myth or the Journey to Útgarðr.

*The Baldr myth*: The capture of the Loki salmon, the explanation of the origin of the net and Loki as the inventor of the net.

*Lokasenna*: The capture of the Loki salmon, the drawing of the net. Loki, the foster brother of Óðinn.

Loki's transformation into animals in various connections indicates that he has been understood as an alternatively theriomorphic and anthropomorphic deity. Loki's transformation into different animals does not, however, mean that he can be interpreted for example as an aquatic being because he fights Heimdallr in the guise of a seal or because he turns himself into a fish. Neither ought one to draw the conclusion from Loki's transformation into a mare or his dressing up as a woman that he is sexually ambivalent. The transformation into *mare, fly, flea, bird, fish, old woman* is determined by the specific situations of the tales. *The epic course of events decides in which guise the character is to appear.* When Loki appears as a messenger, the bird guise is the traditional theriomorphic one. In all these animal guises, as well as the shoes, Loki can travel "lopt ok lög", as Snorri describes it.

The individual different transformations into animals ought thus not to be regarded as significant for the Loki figure.

In the small remainder of myths which is left when all the international material has been subtracted, the *catch myths* seem to play the most important part. Loki is actually appearing in three different catch myths:

- in *Reginismál and the Andvari myth* as the person who catches the pike with Rán's net;
- in *the Baldr myth and Lokasenna* as the person who is caught himself, furthermore by his own invention — the net (Snorri);
- in *the myth of Sif's hair*, where Loki is caught in the air and his lips are sewn together.

In this remainder of myths which could be authentic of Loki, nets and catchings play an important part.

The investigation has led to establishing that the following traits *can be constitutive of Loki*:

1. Loki as the foster brother of Óðinn (Lokasenna);
2. Loki as the companion of the thunder god (the Geirrøðr myth and Þórsdrápa, the journey to Útgarðr [Þrymskviða]);
3. Loki as the inventor of the net and as connected with catch myths (Snorri's Baldr myth, Reginsmál and the Andvari myth, Lokasenna and the myth of Sif's hair).

These three different traits are inconsistent; one of them should be primary in relation to the other two. Which of these three forms represents the most original character of the Loki figure has to be determined with the aid of the modern material concerning the Locke figure which has been kept alive by the terms and expressions of oral popular tradition.

The first concept of Loki as the foster brother of Óðinn has no equivalent in the modern material.

The second concept of Loki as the companion of the thunder god agrees with an Icelandic saying: Leingi geingr Loki ok Þór, léttir ei hríðum (i.e. Þórr and Loki are walking for a long time, the storm does not end).

Otherwise, no material covering these two concepts has been preserved.

But with the third group concerning Loki's connection with nets and catch — whether he is the subject or object of it — some interesting material from the modern recordings is connected, which should be emphasised and which can be placed in relation to *Loki as the inventor of the net*, and perhaps even explain *why* Loki has been represented as its inventor. This connection between the Old Norse myths and the modern Scandinavian material, which I am going to discuss here, is founded on the *identity* of Loki and *Locke*, which means spider, and also on observations of the role of the spider in the myths of primitive people and in hunting communities.

## LOKI AND THE TRICKSTER FIGURE

In the first group of myths — numbered 1—6 — Loki's role as provider and re-provider is stressed. This myth cycle corresponds phenomenologically to the cycle of robbery myths round the trickster figure in the tradition of the North American Indians.

In the North American myth cycle the trickster is the *only* deity who himself provides and steals all the things that are necessary to man, from different demons, in the same way as Loki provides the Asa gods with their more or less necessary treasures.

No antagonism or animosity between Loki and the other Asa gods can be traced — except in the Baldr myth. The *dilemma* that Loki finds himself in where he is forced to promise something in order to save his own life is a motif which is *epically* necessary in the Old Norse myth cycle. The harm that Loki causes the Asa gods belongs to the traditional introduction and is followed by his restoring everything to rights.

When Loki appears as a mischief maker in conflict with the Asa gods, it is an introductory motif explaining why he himself gets into trouble and why he is forced to promise to provide or do something in order to save his own skin. On this point the myths of Loki are surprisingly similar. These myths are also similar in that *cunning* plays an important part in them. The cunning is necessary for the provider and re-provider myths — it is not with strength that the treasures will be provided, but with cunning, and therefore the primus motor of these robbery myths appears cunning and wily. In this respect the Scandinavian rob-

bery myths are of the same character as the North American ones, and the American Indian "trickster" as well as his Scandinavian counterpart therefore appears sly. This type of myth is of a different kind from, for example, the giant slayer myths, where strength and power is often the most important thing.

In his investigation of Loki, de Vries has explained his character by saying that Loki is a *trickster*. Dumézil explains the Loki figure by the statement that Loki is — not a trickster — but a "mythological character". This mythological character is, according to Dumézil, nothing else than a *religious idea* which lies both behind *Loki* in Scandinavia and *Syrdon* in the Caucasus. I cannot agree with his opinion that Loki should be more closely related to *Syrdon* than to any other trickster figures.

Whether one prefers to call Loki a trickster or a religious idea, is a matter of indifference in this context. Of interest is only the fact that Loki's *character* is regarded as *primary* both by de Vries and Dumézil.

But is the trickster figure or the "religious idea" really the primary thing? Why does the trickster become a "trickster"? The scholars have called the trickster by many names: ancestor, culture-hero, demi-god, Heilbringer, Schelm, Heros.

The trickster figure has given the scholars much trouble just by its complexity and intricate nature. The inner *contradictions* of this figure have attracted many explanations and interpretations of its *character*.

Why is the trickster sometimes good, sometimes evil? Why is he sometimes god, sometimes man, sometimes divinely wise or humanly foolish? How can a religious idea or a deity be contained in such an antithetic mixture, in such a many-faceted character?

For the scholar of the History of Religion as well as for the psychologist,<sup>1</sup> it is natural to regard the *character* as the primary matter. They hold the view that the character has formed the material. For the scholar mainly concerned with tradition, it is

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<sup>1</sup> For the deep-reaching psychological analyses cf. C. G. Jung in JUNG-KERÉNY-RADIN, *Der göttliche Schelm*. Cf. also CAMPBELL, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, and VAN DEURSEN, *Der Heilbringer*. KOCK, *Der Heilbringer*, ib. Is "der Heilbringer" a God or not?

natural to start with the material. I mean that this *character has secondarily been crystalised out of the material*. It is the material which has formed the trickster character.

An observation made by von Sydow shows that certain categories of literature (ghost legends, humorous stories, for example) have a tendency for cycle formation. One ghost story leads to the telling of other ghost stories — until the audience gets bored. In the same way the humorous stories have a tendency to succeed each other, one joke leads to another. It becomes an associative linking of anecdote to anecdote.

Likewise, creation stories and legends of origin tend to be told at the same time and become associated with one another. This *mode of narration*, the actual situation at the time of the story telling, has had a certain importance for the formation of the trickster figure. Because, this association of types of myths round the theme of “the creation” are naturally enough, connected to a *first being*, the *first man* or *deity*. The *different* stories round the same theme explain why the trickster, who invents and arranges things, gets his complex nature. Sometimes he creates something good — from the point of view of man — sometimes he creates something evil. The stories of cunning and wisdom on the one hand, and stupidity on the other, of foresight or short-sight give a richly faceted picture of the central character of these stories.

It is not the *character* which forms the story, but it is the *part* in the story which, indirectly, makes its central character brave or cowardly, clever or stupid, kind or malicious, peaceful or noisy etc. Thus the central personage acquires such a complex and contradictory character depending on the different and contradictory stories which have been linked to each other. It is not a schizoid type of person or a double nature like Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde that is the background of the trickster, but it is the *associating mode of narration* and the *situation at the time of the telling of the story* which creates *traditional humorous cycles* which are *attributed to a person, an animal, a deity*.

In the same way the hero tales in the manner of the short story as well as the romantic tales of love tend to form themselves into cycles and become linked to the same continually recurring figures. Thus, for example, the heroic tales which glorify Finn and

his men, or the Ulster cycle of tales round Meg and Ailill and their court. Round Arthur and his court are spun the romantic tales or *novelles*. The parts of the lovers in the Continental and Near Eastern *novelles* are played, in Western Europe by Tristan and Isolde, Lancelot and Guinevere, Fleure and Blanche-fleure.

This tendency towards the formation of cycles of humorous stories, myths, tales, *novelles* round a name can be studied, for example, in the cycles of humorous stories concerning historical persons. Best known in Sweden are probably the anecdotes about Bellman, the Swedish poet.

The anecdotes are all of a traditional, perhaps one should say, international type. They do not contain any authentic traits of Bellman's character. It is not to be expected that anyone should be able to interpret Bellman's "character" or analyse his personality with the aid of this material of anecdotes. Therefore, one cannot assume that it is Bellman's character that has created the anecdotal material — just as little as Loki's character has formed the myths. The anecdotes, as well as the myths, are traditional and the main part of them are international. When it is a question of a historical person, it is easier to verify the foundation of the anecdotes. In his essay "Sant och osant om Tegnér",<sup>2</sup> Olle Holmberg has shown that there is no historical or real tradition behind the humorous stories round Tegnér.

The same observation can be made, for example, in LUF's collections of anecdotes concerning historical persons, priests, poets and professors. The many traditional jokes about priests gain in piquancy if they are attributed to a clergyman known to the audience. On the whole, several humorous stories are presented as "true" in order to increase the effect of the joke. The listeners often want the story to be true. How many good stories have not been ruined by the bore's remark: "But, surely, that cannot be true!"

The anecdote acquires new currency when it is connected with a "known" person. Of the material of Bellman stories at LUF all of them can be labelled as traditional. Some of them are the same stories as have been told before of Ulspegel (*Eulenspiegel*), but

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<sup>2</sup> Tegnérstudier till Algot Werin 1942.

have been transferred to Bellman when Eulenspiegel was no longer of current interest.<sup>3</sup> Bellman is only a name which has been taken over and which has become something of an introductory formula to the humorous stories: "Have you heard the story about Bellman. when . . ." or "Have you heard about when Bellman was . . .", "It is told of Bellman . . ." "Thus anecdote is linked to anecdote and the nucleus of this cycle is a figure, who, in this case, has been given the name Bellman. But he could just as well have been called Eulenspiegel or Nasredin Hodscha, Coyote or Iktomi, depending on where the stories were recorded.

The syncretistic picture of Bellman which the stories give, does not represent Bellman's real character, any more than the other syncretistic pictures show the real or original character of the other figures.

When the scholar begins to analyse the material it is understandable that he is baffled by the contradictions of the many faceted, not to say kaleidoscopic trickster figure. What I have wanted to show here is that the explanation is in the *formation of cycles*, not in an original *character*. As individual stories or tales can be connected with historical or fictitious names, so can whole cycles be connected, propter, to a popular name and, post, give this name a "character" which is thus secondary.

It could be compared with some of the modern popular heroes of comic strips who only serve as hooks on which to hang different short stories. An analysis of the character of Felix the Cat, using his roles in different stories as material, must result in the same confusing, ambiguous character. The contradictions only become apparent when the trickster figure is analysed. Such an analysis belongs only to research. The people who tell the story or listen to it have no reason to analyse the trickster figure.

It has been stressed before in this context that the material is primarily fictitious tradition, not religious, and it is therefore important that one should not forget that this tradition is alive as *literature* in its own right, without demands on the philosophy of life or analytical mind of the audience.

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<sup>3</sup> It should be remembered that some of the sayings about Locke also are applied to Ulspegel. This goes to show that Eulenspiegel in some instances has been considered as an equivalent to Locke.



## LOKI, LOCKE AND THE NET

The myth cycles of the tricksters are phenomenologically the same in different parts of the world and they represent their central character as a kaleidoscopic mixture of all qualities. And this central character has been termed trickster etc. by the scholars to differentiate between it and other deities. But what kind of being is it then that can be made into a trickster? This question can really only be answered by the *name* of the trickster. Trickster figures are, for example, on the North-West coast of America: *The raven* (Haida, Tlingit, and other Indian tribes), *the mink* and *the bluejay*<sup>1</sup> (Quinault), *the coyote* (Nez Percé, Jicarilla Apache and other tribes from California, the Plateau and the Prairie), *the rabbit* (in South-East North America), *the spider* (Sioux and other tribes from the Prairie and South-West North America.)

Of all these animals are told largely the same humorous stories and they take part in the creation, i.e. also creation stories of different kinds are linked to these animals. They are “deities”<sup>2</sup> in alternately theriomorphic and anthropomorphic form, depending on which the story demands. It is impossible to judge from the stories if these beings have been understood as mostly animal or mostly human by the audience. On the other hand, it is evident from *the name* that the animal form is the primary one and

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<sup>1</sup> *Cyanocitta cristata*.

<sup>2</sup> Whether they should be called deities or mythic beings is really a question of terminology and without importance to this investigation although it might be important in other circumstances.

that the tales have originally described animals. It is with these as with the animals of the European fables. The animals appear, talk and live like humans but still keep their characteristic animal qualities when the story demands it.

The animal who becomes the central figure of such a cycle of jokes and creation tales secondarily, acquires this complex nature of cunning and knowledge of divine insight and human folly, of goodness and malice — all depending on the points of the stories. Loki shows this very mixture of different qualities, owing to the fact that he is the *central character* in the Old Norse myth cycles of humorous tales and provider myths. But what kind of a being was Loki then originally, if all these traits are only borrowed traits taken from different tales? Here also the answer should be sought in the name: Loki, i.e. the name of the spider. One linguistic obstacle must perhaps be removed before *Loki* can be identified with *Locke*, the popular name of the spider in Southern parts of Sweden.

In the discussion whether an identification of Loki-Locke is possible, one important argument has been overlooked. Those scholars who have denied that Loki and Locke are identical on the grounds that these forms cannot be traced to each other with the aid of the sound-laws, have not been aware of the fact that Loki and Locke *are* identical in the actually existing material. Because in the *Torsvisa* (The Song of Þórr) that has been recorded in Sweden, Denmark and Norway in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries, *Loki* and *Locke* are actually identical. The *Torsvisa* is an account of the Fetching of the Hammer (Þrymskviða), where Loki helps Þórr to recover the stolen hammer. In the popular Scandinavian *variants of the poem* Þórr's servant *Loki* is called *Locke*.

Norwegian: *Laakien* (1750), *Lokke Lagenson* (1695)

Swedish: *Locke Lewe, Locke Loye* (recorded 1650—1700)

Danish: *Loche, Lochy, Lochii, Lokke*, with the addition *Leymand. Leymandt* (1695)  
*Lokki Læjermant, Lirmand* (modern Jutish)  
*liden, lidel, Locke* (modern Jutish)

- Icelandic: *Loki Laufeyar sonr* (Þrymskviða 17)  
*Lóður* (Þrymlur I 21) (Lokrur I 11; III 15, 50; IV 20)  
*Loptur* (Þrymlur I 18)
- Faeroese: *Lokki*.<sup>3</sup>

Loki is here called by the same name as the spider “Locke” and as the “mythical Locke” who figures in many sayings and expressions.

As *Loki* is called *Locke* in the variants of the songs from the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries: it is of interest to establish in which popular expressions and sayings references to *Locke* occur.

Olrik's and Celander's compilations of popular expressions constitute a fully satisfactory collection of material for this investigation. Olrik has drawn the conclusion from the popular expressions that Loki is a gnome who is connected with fire and heat haze. (In his last work he considers Loki as an ancestor figure cf. p. 1.) Celander, on the other hand, has wanted to couple *dwarf* (spider) and dwarf's net with Locke (*spider*) and *lockanät* (spider's net) and thus show that Loki is a *dwarf* and a chthonic being. de Vries who has also investigated the popular sayings establishes soberly and correctly — like v. Sydow<sup>4</sup> — that Locke appears in many sayings which must have been linked to the Locke figure secondarily. Although many of these sayings are secondarily attached to Loki they show his popularity as a hook for these sayings. It indicates that in order to attach all these different sayings he must have held a place as a popular being. It is unnecessary to repeat all the instances where Loki appears in different sayings. Instead the reader is referred to the comments by Olrik, Celander, and de Vries.

Here I am therefore only going to comment on part of the expressions which are of importance only in connection with the name Locke. Of interest are:

#### 1. The mythical Locke of the sayings.

<sup>3</sup> BUGGE and MOE, *Torsvisen i sin norske form* pp. 7, 91 ff. Cf. also GRÜNER-NIELSEN, *Torsvisen paa Færøerne*.

<sup>4</sup> v. SYDOW, *Övernaturliga väsen* p. 156 ff.

2. The name *Locke* for *spider* or *spider-like insects*, as well as the name *lockanät*, *lockaväv* or *lockasnara* (locka net, locka web, locka snare) for *spider's net*.

### 1. Locke in the Sayings

*The heat haze* — one of the signs of spring which is watched for by the farmers — is compared in the sayings to jumping animals, goats, sheep, pigs. On the Friesian islands it is compared to cats (*sommerkatte*) and in England to a colt (*summer-colt*). An other phenomenon of fraction, the reflection of the sun, is called *sol katt* (sun cat) in Sweden and in Denmark we have proof that it is called *Locke Lejerman* as well as *Ulspegel*. In Denmark, Scania and Bornholm, *Locke* (*Lokke*, *Lokkemanden*, *Lockas*, *Lukas*) figures in theses sayings as the owner of the sheep or the goats.

The heat haze is sometimes referred to with this kind of saying: *Lokkemanden* or *Locke sår sin havre* (the Locke Man or Locke sows his oats) (Scania, Denmark and Norway).<sup>5</sup> An expression that seems to be linked with these phenomena and sayings is the Icelandic "*ganga som Loki yfir akra*" (walk like Loki over the fields)<sup>6</sup> which has been understood by the commentator as "*lok', der, bet. et slags (frodigt) ugræs*" ('lok' which means a kind of [thriving] weed).<sup>6</sup> With this are probably connected sayings like *Lockes gräs* (Locke's grass) or *Lockes havre* (Locke's oats) etc. about weeds and other plants.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Cf. BUGGE, *Studier* p. 78.

<sup>6</sup> JÓNSSON, *Ordbog* p. 247 *Loki*.

<sup>7</sup> JENSSEN-TUSCH, *Nordiske Planteavne: Lokes græs, Loen græs* (*Agrostis spica venti*) p. 10; *Lokes* or, *Lokkels græs* (*Poa* and other similar kinds of grass) p. 175; *Lokes* or *Lokkes havre* (*Avena fatua*) and *Lokke(n)s havre* (*Polytrichum commune*) p. 179. Cf. above p. 43. From Norway *Lok* (*Pteris aquilina*) was quoted and in this connection ought also to be mentioned all the names of plants ending in *-lokk* (Old Norse *laukr?*), *lökk*, *låk*, *lokar*, *lok*, *lokker*, *rokker*, *rokler*, *rok* (see *Aspidium Filix mas*) p. 29, (*Aspidium fragilis*) p. 30, (*Asplenium Filix foemina*) p. 30, (*Equisetum*) pp. 79—80, (*Scleranthus*) p. 220, (*Spergula*) pp. 234, 343, (*Agropyrum repens*) p. 7 (*Anemone hepatica* and *Anemone nemorosa*) p. 17.

From the Shetland Islands Olrik quotes *Lokis läins* (seaweed) and *lokis u'*, from Iceland, *lokasjóðr*, *Thlaspi* or (Loki's purse) and *Lokakona* from the Faeroes. From Denmark *låkkilejer* is quoted as a name for dandelion (*Taraxacum vulgare*).

Parallels to *Locke sår sin havre* (Locke sows his oats) and *Lockes havre* or *gräs* (Locke's oats or grass) are found in the names *trollhavre*, *pukhavre*, i.e. plants that cause mischief or are of no use to man. This concept has its equivalent in the Bible, where we read in St. Matthew 13.24—30, 38—39 of a man (the Son of God) who sowed good seed in his field and of his enemy (the devil) who sowed tares among the wheat. (Cf. Bugge, *Studier* p. 78). Professor Ljunggren has drawn my attention to the Danish expression *Fandens Melkebøtter* (the devil's milk firkins) for dandelions (*Taraxacum vulgare*).

In connection with the heat haze there existed another expression: "*Jorden är dragen säga vi då vi på våren se värmerök och värmedallring över åkrarna. Då har Locke (spindeln) harvat och då kan vi så säden när vi vill.*" (The soil has been "drawn", we say when we see the heat haze and vibration over the fields. Then Locke [the spider] has harrowed and we can sow when we like) (Småland).<sup>8</sup>

Another word for the heat haze is *Våroxen* (the Spring ox), but this expression is used also for another phenomenon of nature and mark of weather, namely the spider's webs in the furrows. "*Våroxen var spindelväv, utspänt t.ex. mellan ett par gärdselstörar. När så solstrålarna sken i spindelvävens daggdroppar, så det glittrade, sade bonden att nu fick han lov att börja våra, för våroxen hade börjat droppa.*" (The Spring ox was the spider's web, extended, for example, between two stakes. When the sun-rays were reflected in the dew drops on the spider's web so that they glittered, the farmer said that now he had to start with the Spring farming as the Spring ox had started to drip) (Småland).<sup>9</sup> *Våroxen* as the name for the spider's web and heat haze is of interest and can be coupled with the term *Lockes får* (Locke's sheep) or *Locke's getter* (goats) which is used about the heat haze, but in this expression from Åsbo—Össjö in Scania means the spider's

<sup>8</sup> SVENSSON, *Bondens år* p. 11.

<sup>9</sup> *Ib.* p. 11.

webs on the ground. "När spindelväven låg på marken om sommarmorgnarna så sa man: 'Nu e' Lukas ute me' fåren.' När vi ser de' har vi den regeln att det blir torrt väder tre dagar efter. Det är mest på hösten, man ser det, inte så mycket på sommaren." (When the spider's web lay on the ground in the Summer mornings people said: 'Now Lukas (Luke) is out with the sheep.' When we see this we have the rule that it is going to be dry for three days. It is usually in the Autumn one sees this — not so much in the Summer.)<sup>10</sup>

The phenomena mentioned above, the heat haze and the spider's webs in the furrows, have been important signs for Spring farming and weather and are therefore mentioned in Per Brahe's *Hushållsbok* of 1581.<sup>11</sup> Of the spider's webs in the furrows, he says, for example, "Rätta såtiden är, när dvärgnäten draga sig över korna i åkern. Likaså när gärdesglingret synes, då är brukandes med all makt."

"Nu har Locke haft bråttom" (Now Locke has been in a hurry) is an expression about the spider's webs in the furrows. Only in this expression the *mythical Locke* has a real meaning. It is the *spider* who has been in a hurry and he is spoken of as an anthropomorphic being. The *mythical Locke* exists in different sayings, but it is only in connection with *the webs on the ground* that the expression has an intelligible meaning. In this saying there is a connection with the name of the spider — *Locke* — and with the spider's web — *lockasnara* or *lockaväv*.

The expression "*at före Lokkes breve*" (to carry Lokke's letters) which is quoted by Peder Syv, occurs in many forms, like "*höre Per Lokkes* (Nokkes, Lakkes, Nakkes) *breve*" (hear Per Lokke's [Nokke's, Lakke's, Nakke's] letters) [i.e. to lie or listen to lies]. Another expression which seems related to this, is a saying recorded sporadically in Sweden and Finland<sup>12</sup> that *spindeln spådde brev* (the spider foretold letters)<sup>13</sup> and such a spider was

<sup>10</sup> Personal communication in 1956 by Nils Sjunnesson, Åsbo-Össjö, born 1887.

<sup>11</sup> SVENSSON op. cit. p. 11.

<sup>12</sup> WESSMAN, *Ur Anteckningsboken* 1934 p. 116 no. 23.

<sup>13</sup> Augerum, Blekinge, LUF 587:4; Ivetofta, Fru Alstad, Skåne, LUF 3018:19, 5:2; Hallaryd, Småland LUF 118:48. In different parts of Sweden the spider is also said to bring "news".

called a *brevlocke* (letter spider).<sup>14</sup> While the mythical Locke cannot be explained in the other sayings, we have a connection with the spider Locke in the latter ones.

## 2. Locke as a Name for the Spider

In his investigation of the mythical origin of Loki (Lokes mytiska ursprung p. 24), Celander has stated that, in Sweden, the appellative locke for the spider occurs only in Götaland, while in Svealand and Norrland the spider is called *dvärg* (dwarf) as well as other names, and the web is called *dvärgnät* (dwarf's net).

In the preceding section of this chapter we have seen that some of the sayings about Locke refer to the spider and his work. Here I am only going to quote a few examples of linguistic terms for the spiderlike insects, the spider and the spider's web containing *locke* or *lockanät* or similar linguistic forms.

Vendell gives us examples of the name *locke* for the spider in Swedish dialects in Finland.<sup>15</sup> Of interest is also here that *locke* was the name for the spider in Mediaeval Swedish. Söderwall<sup>16</sup> gives us the following examples, *lokka eter* [*lukka-*] [Spider's venom]; *lokka nät* [*lukka-*] [spider's net]; *lokka väv* [*lwikka-*]. This indicates that the word *locke* for spider was known outside its restricted area of to day, i.e. Götaland, the Southern part of Sweden. Also the distribution of the special formula connected with the throwing away of the first milk-tooth in the fire ("Locke, locke give me a bone-tooth instead of a gold-tooth") shows that the name Locke was also known in this formula in Svealand and in Finland.

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<sup>14</sup> Ysane, Blekinge LUF 2815: 4; Borgholm, Öland LUF 1177: 7; Gärdslösa, Öland, Ulma 5384: 10. The same belief is also found in Germany. Cf. Hdwb. d. A. 8 "Spinne" col. 275 and col. 269 the spider's role as a messenger. This corresponds to Loki's role in Old Norse mythology and to the expression in Dänemark: "före Lokkes breve." The spider's role as messenger is a very popular one among the North American Indians referring to the spider's ability to fly on his thread.

<sup>15</sup> VENDELL, Ordbok över de östsvenska dialekterna p. 557 ff.

<sup>16</sup> SÖDERWALL, Ordbok öfver svenska medeltidsspråket 1 p. 776.

According to Rietz, *Locke* (OSw. *lukki*, *lokke*) or *lække* [-ar],<sup>17</sup> is often used as a name for the *harvestman*, the long legged spider *Phalangium opilio*, also called *lockespindel* (locke spider) or *Helga högben* (*Helga Longlegs*).<sup>18</sup> From Bornholm Espersen quotes *lokka*: “*almindelig Meier, Høstemand, et slags Edderkop*” (commonly Harvester, Harvestman, a kind of spider).<sup>19</sup> From the Faeroes we are familiar with *låtje* (< *lokke*): “*langbenet myg*” (longlegged midge)<sup>20</sup> and *lokkur* with the same meaning, as well as *grindalokkur*, “*Stankelben, langbenet Myg (hvis Tilsynekomst skal varsle Grindehvalens komme)*” (The longlegged midge whose appearance gives warning of the coming of the Grinde whale).<sup>21</sup> *Helga högben* has a counterpart in Danish *Helle højelår* or *langlår* (*Helle Holy? High thigh or Longthigh*), “*en slags stor langbenet skræddermyg (tipula)*” (a kind of large longlegged midge *tipula*) or a longlegged spider.<sup>22</sup> The Norwegian equivalent is *Loye* (*Loje*) *Langbein*.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>17</sup> RIETZ, Ordbok p. 418, and also the forms *lækk(ar)*, *lukke*, *lokke*.

<sup>18</sup> SU *lockespindlar* col. 505. ROLLAND, Faune pop. de la France 3 p. 244 ff.; 12 p. 140 ff. gives the different European names for *Phalangium Ophilio* as well as *Arachnea*.

<sup>19</sup> ESPERSEN, Bornholmsk Ordbog p. 208.

<sup>20</sup> HAMMERSHAIMB, Færösk Antologi 2 p. 437.

<sup>21</sup> JACOBSEN-MATRAS, Færøsk-Dansk Ordbog pp. 220, 123. I have to thank professor Chr. Matras, Copenhagen, for his kindness to let me see the material for his Faeroese lexicon which will appear in print in the near future.

It can be noted that *Loki* in Olrik's Faeroese references is spelt *Lokki* by Matras. According to Matras the mythical *Lokki* in the Faeroese corresponds to the Icelandic *Loki*. Of interest is Matras' comments on *Lokki* in *Stednavne paa Faeroerne* pp. 7, 32 ff. Of special interest in the present investigation is the fact that Matras has been able to get evidence that *lokkane* for spider's web was also known in the northern part of Eysteroy (Nýggi búni keisarans. *Varðin*. Føroyskt tíðarskrift 3). Further the word *lokkaroykúr* is used for spider's webs in the northern part of Eysteroy. *Lokkaroykúr* (and *Lokkalogi*) is also used about the first wet smoke (about the first flame) at the drying of the seed.

Cf. also RASMUSSEN, Føroysk Plantunøvn p. 106 *Lokkakona* and Gomul føroysk heimarað p. 83 *Lokkakona*.

The examples mentioned above show that *lokki* was known as a name for the spider and spiderlike insects.

<sup>22</sup> FEILBERG, Ordbog 1 p. 579, 2 p. 380.

<sup>23</sup> ROSS, Norsk Ordbog p. 486, *Loke*.



In addition to the forms *lokke*, *lockanät* and *lockasnar* for spider and spider's web,<sup>24</sup> Rietz gives also the forms *nåkke*, pl. *nåkkar*, (Närke, Scania) and *nåkkasnar*, *nåkknät* (Småland, Finland: Ingå, Nerpes), *lökkasnar*, *lökkanät* (Småland, Blekinge). "*Lökkarne anses därstädes för heliga och då man vill förstöra löckkar, och löckkanät, sker det alltid genom att kasta dem på elden för att förekomma all deraf härflytande förgering eller olycka.*" (The spiders are regarded as sacred there, and if one should want to destroy spiders and spider's webs, this is always done by throwing them into the fire in order to prevent all destruction and misfortune that might come from it.)<sup>25</sup>

The great importance of the spider in the past is indicated by the still existing superstitious notions that one is not allowed to kill a spider as it brings bad luck.<sup>26</sup> To the spider is also linked the concept of evil and good omens — but these types of omens can be connected with so many other animals and phenomena that their use in the interpretation of omens are of no value as evidence.

The name *Helga* [Holy?] Longlegs as well as the personification or anthropomorphic form of the spider or spider like insect indicate that the spider has occupied a place of distinction in the past.

### **Loki=Locke=the Spider**

*Locke* is the name of the *spider* in the Southern parts of Sweden and was also the name of the spider in Mediaeval Swedish. As this is the only known meaning of the word, it seems probable that it is the animal *locke* or spider which forms the basis of the anthropomorphic *Locke*, and that he — like the trickster-animal —

<sup>24</sup> RIETZ, Ordbok p. 475. To these examples of the name *locke* for the spider or spider like insects could be added many more — not least from the material of the archives which would confirm the distribution of the name *locke* for spider in the Southern part of Sweden.

<sup>25</sup> RIETZ, Ordbok p. 475.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Hdwb. d. A. 8 "Spinne", with many German parallels to the Scandinavian beliefs and superstitions about the spider. Cf. also FEILBERG, Ordbog, *edderkoppe*.

appears in human form. How difficult it is to establish the borderline between the anthropomorphic and theriomorphic changes is shown by Thompson:

"A point that strikes the most cursory reader of American Indian tales is the little difference made between animals and persons. It is impossible at times to tell which concept is in the mind of the teller. The characteristics seem generally to be transferable at a moment's notice. The same general way of thinking has produced our negro tales of "Brer Rabbit," and these seem to give even mature civilized persons little difficult." — — — "The identification of the trickster and transformer is a feature which deserves special notice. I have called attention to the fact — borne out by most of the mythologies in which trickster and culture-hero appear as one person — that the benefactions bestowed by the culture-hero are not given in an altruistic spirit, but that they are the means by which he supplies his own needs. Even in his heroic achievements he remains a trickster bent upon the satisfaction of his own desires. This feature may be observed distinctly in the Raven-cycle of the Northwest coast. He liberates the sun, not because he pities mankind; but because he desires it. . . . He gets the fresh water because he is thirsty, and unwillingly spills it all over the world while he is making his escape."<sup>27</sup>

This quotation could just as well refer to the Loki figure. It is remarkable that the theriomorphic form has been preserved in many myths of the *Asiatic* peoples and of the North American Indians, while in the European tradition of the same myth types it has been replaced by anthropomorphic beings. If we take the Earthdiver myth<sup>28</sup> as an example, in North Asiatic and North American tradition *water fowl* (muskrat in the Eastern parts of North America) dive to the bottom of the sea to carry back soil in their beaks or under their claws to use for the creation of the Earth. In European tradition the birds have been replaced by the *devil* who dives to the bottom of the sea and comes up with soil under his finger-nails or in his mouth. He keeps some of it for his own purpose and when God makes the Earth grow, the soil in the devil's mouth grows too, until he is forced to spit it out

<sup>27</sup> THOMPSON, *Tales of the North American Indians* p. 281.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. ROOTH, *The Creation Myths of the North American Indians*.

thus creating the mountains and roughness on the otherwise smooth and fine surface. In the European myths there is an obvious tendency towards anthropomorphisation which probably also influenced the trickster figure. The *name of Loki* is really the only preserved evidence which suggests that the anthropomorphic figure has developed out of the animal form — i.e. the spider.

An important additional factor to this personification or anthropomorphisation lies in the realising and liberating power of the proverb or saying. In its epigrammatic form the proverb wants to concretise and illustrate and that aim is often reached by a *personification* of the phenomenon of nature, the month, the day or the animal.

In most of the proverbs and sayings *Locke* is a mythical anthropomorphic being, in some he is still the spider. As regards *Loki* and *Locke* it cannot be a question of a personal name<sup>29</sup> which has been used in the different proverbs and sayings, because such a name does not seem to have existed. Nor are we otherwise familiar with a similar heterogeneous group of sayings connected with any other personal name. A certain personal name can indeed be connected with a certain proverb, but the same name does not occur in *a group of heterogeneous proverbs*. The possibility that *Loki* or *Locke* should originally be a personal name does thus seem excluded.

The very *quantity* of different Scandinavian sayings or proverbs about *Locke* connected with work indoors and outdoors, with humorous expressions, with names of plants, with phenomena of nature, with falsehood and mischief, with the interpretation of omens, *shows that behind this rich tradition there must be a concept of a once extremely popular being*. In this heterogeneous representation of the proverbs we have a parallel to the likewise heterogeneous representation of the myths of the popular *Loki* figure.

Of the Old Norse gods *Loki* is the one who acts as *primus motor* in most of the ancient Old Norse myths. In the proverbs *Locke*

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<sup>29</sup> Cf. LIND, Norsk-isländska personbinamn. ib. Norsk-isländska dopnamn.

is the most frequently recurrent figure in different connections. The cycle of sayings about Locke and the cycle of myths about Loki indicates that the two central figures in both cycles are identical. It would seem highly improbable that we should have had in Scandinavia at relatively close periods (the myths about Loki were written down in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries, and the sayings about Locke were written down in the Seventeenth Century when they were still popular, according to Peder Syv) two big cycles, one about a Loki and one about a Locke, which would have no relationship with each other. Could we for example have had one appellative locke=spider in ordinary speech and in some of the sayings, and one mythical Locke combined with other sayings connected with the most various things as falsehood, mischief, plant names, natural phenomena, weather lore, the formula connected with throwing away the first tooth. etc., and could we have had still another being, the god Loki, whose only invention is the net and who is the central figure in a cycle of myths? I think it would be very unlikely, if there were no relationship between them. Evidently the sayings and proverbs about Locke were more numerous and popular in the days of Peder Syv than they are today. Although some of them still have survived sporadically they have lost their meaning.

I think it is more likely that we have the same trickster-figure appearing on the one hand in the popular sayings and on the other hand in the cycle of myths written down by Icelandic mythographers.

All the proverbs and myths must, in all probability, refer to the same figure (possibly with the exception of the very few proverbs concerning fire which could allude to a personification of fire or flame) and Locke and Loki be identical as they are *de facto* in *Torsvisa*.

We have seen how the investigation of the myths has led to the establishment of the fact that Loki occurred in myths of the catch, and that in one myth he borrowed Rán's net, in another was himself the *inventor of the net*. This is Loki's only invention in Mythology, and should be taken as evidence that the myth has preserved an ancient motif. It corresponds to the *Locke* of the

proverbs who *spins his nets* in the furrows and to the name Locke given to the spider and spiderlike insects.

As the only known meaning of *Locke* is *spider* and as we have shown that Locke and Loki are *de facto* identical in the *Torsvisa* and seem to be identical in other connections, the original meaning of Loki should be spider. Of further significance is that Snorri's one and only information of *Loki as the inventor of the net in that minority of myths, which can be authentic of Loki*, corresponds to the linguistic meaning of Locke as the spider — i.e. the spinner, who makes nets.

If we interpret Loki as the spider, Loptr, the other name for Loki, gains a new significance as alluding to the spiders ability to walk in the air. Loki's ability of flying "lopt ok lög" may have its significance in this connection although the mythographer explains it by means of his winged shoes. Let us summarize:

1. Loki is the central figure in a cycle of myths.
2. Locke is the central figure in a cycle of sayings.
3. In some sayings the mythical Locke is referred to as the spider.
4. Locke is the name for the spider and spiderlike insects in some Scandinavian dialects.
5. Locke was the name for the spider in the Mediaeval Swedish language.
6. Locke and Loki *are* identical in the *Torsvisa* in Scandinavia.
7. In the Faeroese the mythical Lokki corresponds to the Icelandic Loki.
8. Most of the Loki myths with the exception of a few myths concerning catching and nets have parallels outside Scandinavia and cannot therefore give evidence as to the authentic character of Loki.
9. In one of these few myths Loki is the inventor of the net according to Snorri.
10. The kenning in *Þórsdrápa* refers to Loki as "fellir fjörnets".

These points mentioned above do, in my opinion, give us reason to identify Loki with Locke and consequently interpret Loki as the spider and "the inventor of the net" as Snorri says. The name *Loptr* for Loki would then be understood as alluding to the spiders's ability of "walking in the air." (Cf. p. 200 note 14).

The following table shows Loki-Locke in the different categories of popular literature and in the sayings:

Nomen proprium			Appellativum
Ancient Old Norse Mythology	Folksong	Mythical Sayings	Name of Spider and Spiderlike Insects
Loki and the net.	Loki=Locke	Locke	Locke=spider

To Loki as the *inventor of the net* of Scandinavian mythology is thus joined the circle of Loki=Locke of the folk song, the mythical Locke of the sayings and the appellatives *locke* and *lockanät* for spider and spider's web.

### The Spider as a Trickster

Celander explained the name Loki-Locke as the "encloser" [i.e. encloser of the dead in the mountains or the homes of the dwarfs] and related to the *locke* [spider] which is the "encloser" of the flies in his net or snare. Celander confers the spiders ability to enclose [*lock*] the insects in his web with Loki-Locke's enclosing of the dead (a theory which is far from sustained by the existing material). He considers both *locke* [spider] and Locke-Loki derived from the verb *lúkan* to close.

In this connection de Vries says in the Problem of Loki p. 238:

The etymology of *locke* "spider" proposed by Celander is of course only one out of many more possibilities. Loki may represent a *\*lukēn*, nom. agentis of a verb *lūkan* "to close". But the fundamental meaning is "to bind, to twist", as seems to be proved by on. *lokkr*, oe. *locc*, as compared with gr. *luginos* "fletted" and lit. *luginas* "flexible".

Here could be added similar forms in the Scandinavian dialects connected with technical terms for spinning.

The word *locke* for the spider would well agree with the meaning of the verb to bind, to twist alluding to the spider's ability of twisting his thread or binding his net. This would be a parallel to the relationship between *spider-spin* and Ge. *Spinne-spinnen*.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Hdwb. d. A. 8 col. 265.

In this connection it may be of interest to recall the name *Lugh* in the Celtic mythology as there might be a relationship between Loki and the possible trickster character of the Celtic Lugh as has already been pointed out by other scholars.<sup>31</sup> As to the etymological relationship between Loki and Lugh it is an open question which may be answered with the help of Celtic linguists.

The suggestion might be shocking that Loki=Locke was originally the spider which became the tricksterfigure in Old Norse mythology. However, as we have seen, the spiders have been considered in some way "holy" and it has been considered unwise to kill a spider as it would bring bad luck. We must remember that the spiders have been identified with dwarfs, as the names indicate, in Svealand and Norrland, where the spider is called *dwarf* and his net *dwarf's net*. The same phenomenon can be noted in other cases where certain kinds of animals (ants, toads) have the same names as special supernatural beings.<sup>32</sup>

The anthropomorphisation of certain animals seems to be the common background for some supernatural beings as well as for the trickster figure.

The spiders have been identified with dwarfs in Sweden (and also in other parts of Europe), and they have been regarded with a certain reverence in Scandinavia until our days. The spiders have been considered a kind of supernatural beings or dwarfs for instance in Japanese tradition.<sup>33</sup>

Also from other parts of the world we have examples of the importance of the *spider* trickster. I have already before mentioned that the spider plays the part of the trickster in the Southern part of North America and Meso America as well as in Oceania, the Far East and India.<sup>34</sup> In these areas the spider is

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<sup>31</sup> KRAPPE, *The Science of Folklore* p. 333. DE VRIES, *The Problem of Loki* pp. 254 ff., 271 ff.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. CELANDER, *Lokes mytiska ursprung* p. 73 ff. v. SCHROEDER, *Germanische Elben und Götter beim Estenvolke* p. 52 ff.

<sup>33</sup> Personal communication from Dr H. Ikeda. Cf. the notion of goblin — spiders in HEARN, *Japanese Fairy Tales* p. 32.

<sup>34</sup> Also in Africa the spider occurs as a trickster figure. See FROBENIUS, *Die Weltanschauung der Naturvölker* p. 296 ff. *Anansi Sem*, *Spindelsagor från Guldkusten*.

said to have helped in the creation of the Earth. It is the spider who extends his web across the water and it is that web which becomes the foundation of the Earth. Or else the spider steadies the newly created Earth by fastening it to the four corners of the World with his thread, or four spiders of different colors sit at the four corners of the Earth — a motif which is often found in Chinese and Meso American tradition.<sup>35</sup>

In North American tradition the spider or spiderlike insect also plays an important part as the first living being in the world — because it had the faculty of being able to walk both on air and on water — as different from other animals.

One of the most important primitive instruments of mankind was the net, and it is probably, above all, the ability of certain kinds of spiders to make nets which has been observed and admired. This ability has made the spider appear as a cunning and shrewd animal. The association of the important snare or catch net with the rope or the artistic web of the spider can explain why the spider has been noticed and has become an important mythological figure in different parts of the world.

Probably the ability to make a net has made the spider Locke-Loki into a mythological figure who has acquired an anthropomorphic form<sup>36</sup> which has been preserved in myth and proverb.

That Loki has been an independent mythological being or “deity” who has been included in the Asa Olympus is indicated by Loki’s occurrence in connection sometimes with Óðinn, sometimes Þórr, sometimes as an Asa god himself, sometimes as an outsider. Thus, for example, Snorri names all the Asa gods separately, and *after* the finished enumeration he adds a part on Loki and his progeny. Loki’s independance as a “deity”, side by side with the Asa gods — without cult place and worship — makes him into the only Asa god who can act as *primus motor* in different tales which hardly could have been adapted to the gods who have their given places on the Olympus and seem to be inserted into a dogmatic system.

<sup>35</sup> ROTH, *The Creation Myths of the North American Indians* p. 503 ff.

<sup>36</sup> For the anthropomorphic description of Loki cf. *Sörlaþáttir* p. 48 and *Gylfaginning* chap. 33.



The reason why just Loki is the one of the Asa gods who appears as a “trickster” — and even a devil — is probably the fact that he has been an independent “deity” with a popularity which has not only allowed him to take part of the life of the Asa Olympus but also, in his role as trickster, to survive in the popular sayings up to modern times.

The mythical Locke of the sayings is no longer a living reality. the references to whom are obvious to everybody as they perhaps still were to Peder Syv and his contemporaries. But in the sheltering sarcophagus of the traditional saying the Loki figure lies as a mummified remnant of a faith of bygone days.

## THE EVIL LOKI AND THE SYMBOLICAL INTERPRETATION OF THE MYTHS

Ström has pointed out that most scholars have usually only paid attention to *one* side of Loki's character. Ström himself has focused his attention on the *evil* side of the Loki figure and interprets Loki as a demon of cold and winter and the Baldr myth as a myth concerning the succession of the seasons, where light is represented by Baldr and darkness by Loki. The concept of Baldr as a god of light and vegetation has been held by several scholars, especially by Neckel and Kauffmann.

As support for the interpretation of the Loki figure as a demon of cold and winter have been quoted the tales where Loki is shown to be in opposition against the Asa gods — then especially the Baldr myth, nota bene Snorri's Baldr myth. as in the other variants. possibly with the exception of *Völuspá*, it is not Loki but Hqðr alone who plays the part of Baldr's slayer.

The interpretation of Loki as a demon of cold and darkness is further supported by the narrative concerning the progeny of Loki, where Loki appears as *parens monstorum* and by the narrative of the fettered Loki — the enemy of the world who is going to remain bound until Ragnarok. This is *one* picture of Loki which can be got out of a syncretistic summary of the Loki myths. But if one investigates the different sources to see how they are connected with contemporary European literature, it turns out that the Baldr myth is most closely related to the British tradition of Balor-Lugh, i.e. on variants of type 931 or the Oedipus tale. As has been pointed out above, the Classical tale was known and cherished during the Middle Ages not least because of the trans-

lations of the Thebaid. The fratricide, the blind slayer or marksman, the visit to the Underworld — all these motifs have been applied to Baldr and Loki in the Scandinavian tradition and can not therefore show any original traits of Loki (nor of Baldr).

The story of Loki as the father of monsters is founded, as has been pointed out above (p. 162 ff.), on Isidore of Seville's commentary to the Genesis of the Monsters and therefore Loki's "wickedness" in this story cannot be regarded as an authentic or original Loki trait, even though it is found already in the supposedly oldest Scandinavian sources.

Among the evidence of Loki's wickedness has also been counted his vexatious behaviour in the provider and re-provider myths. In these myths Loki is mischievous rather than malicious — annoying rather than evil. It has, however, been stressed above that this character of his is associated with the leading part of this story and is taken on by anyone who plays the part of the provider.

Seemingly, Loki appears as *evil*, but an investigation of the material shows that there is no basis for the interpretation of Loki's "wickedness" as an authentic trait, as the myths can be traced back to foreign models. Loki's "wickedness" and diabolical traits are concepts which have, secondarily, come to be connected with the Loki figure in Scandinavia.

Individual features in the myths have also been given a symbolical interpretation to facilitate the interpretation of Loki as an evil demon. Such an interpretation is, for example, that given by Holtsmark of the Þjazi myth. The episodes of Loki who flies into Ásgarðr with Iðunn, the Asa gods who light a fire in order that Þjazi shall fly into it and perish, have been thought to have a connection with the seasonal bonfires which are indeed burning up to this very day. There are, however, not grounds enough to identify the Ásgarðr fire with the seasonal fires and thence draw the conclusion that the Þjazi myth represents a ritual drama of the seasons. Holtsmark calls this interpretation *realistic*<sup>1</sup> thereby meaning that there is a realistic basis for the material, some form of cult or religious rite behind the myth but Carney, see below.

<sup>1</sup> HOLTSMARK, Myten om Idun og Tjatse i Tjodolvs Haustlong p. 97.

calls this *naivistic*. The idea of symbolism in the myths is so deeply rooted among scholars that it cannot be left out of this survey.

### The Symbolical Interpretation of the Myths

It is not only the importance of the Scandinavian texts which has been overestimated as evidence of heathen belief and cult. Like all other literature, the ancient Celtic poems, for example, have been closely examined for evidence of ancient Celtic rites and myths. In *Studies of Irish Literature and History*, Carney has objected to this interpretation of ancient Celtic literature and calls it "naivistic". By that he means, I presume, that some scholars have understood the tales and myths as "naive" representations of reality from which one can deduct both geographical and historical as well as religious facts.

While the historians regard the material in a soberer light nowadays, generally dismissing the greater part of the Old Norse as well as the Celtic material as impossible historical sources, the concept of the myths as a source of religious belief and practice is firmly established in research.

On an earlier occasion I have treated the different attitudes of the scholars and their importance in *Scholarly Tradition in Folk-tale Research*.<sup>2</sup> The scholars who use the interpreting method want to see a concealed meaning in their material, tale, legend, myth. The theory that tales, myths, legends (and even practices) have a concealed religious meaning is a heritage from late Neo-Romanticism. During the Nineteenth Century the overriding need was to find the *religious* meaning. During the Twentieth Century interest in Psychology and Sociology also becomes evident in the study of popular tradition, so that the tales, the legends and the myths have been given a *psychological* or *sociological* interpretation besides the religious one. This way or *method of interpretation* can and should be used when dealing with *cult myths*, i.e.

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<sup>2</sup> *Fabula* 1 p. 193.

when the myth is connected with cult and ritual.<sup>3</sup> The method has, however, been misused and applied to material where its use has not been justified.

It has already been pointed out that Loki appears secondarily as "evil" in part of the material. But even if it had been a primary trait would it necessarily have meant that he also was a demon of cold and winter? And would it necessarily have meant that the Baldr myth was meant as a seasonal drama with Baldr representing the light and summer and Loki representing the darkness and winter?

In most epic narratives there is a *conflict* between the evil and the good person, between the hero and his enemy, between the heroine and her jealous sisters, stepmother or mother-in-law etc. This conflict is necessary on *epic* grounds, as it carries the course of events forward. Without conflicts there would be no difficulties to overcome, and then there is no drama, no excitement — just those things that are necessary to the *epic* narrative. The hero has to fight a difficult adversary, or the hero is let down by his brothers or friends. The heroine is persecuted by the evil designs of her stepmother or mother-in-law.

Already this contrast, this *state of conflict* is enough to make the scholar see the parallelism in the contrast between summer and winter, between light and darkness, between life and death. But that does not give him the right to identify conflicts of human life with the contrasts of nature, to identify *the hero* and his *adversary* with life and death or light and darkness.

The contrast between Loki and Baldr has led to the identification of the characters as summer and winter, life and death. Using this identification we could also interpret any folk-tale as a symbolic myth. Let us for instance take the folk-tale of the good and the evil sister — Aa 480 — and interpret it as a symbolic myth about the successions of the seasons:

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<sup>3</sup> In a separate work I hope to return to the problem of the different categories of myths. The terminology and classification of the myths is difficult as becomes evident for example, in EDSMAN's critical survey p. 34 ff. in *Ignis divinus*. Cf. also JAFI 1955 which devoted an issue to these problems p. 379 ff. Myth: A. Symposium.

The good sister is pushed into the well by her wicked step-mother. (This is Summer which is expelled by Winter to the Underworld.) She comes to a meadow and follows a path. During her wanderings she meets a ram, who asks her to shear him, a cow who asks to be milked, a fruit-tree, who asks her to pick its fruit, an oven who asks her to take out the buns so that they do not get burned. (Summer — i.e. light and fertility — returns to the Underworld and stays until the winter season is over. The ram, the cow, the apples and even the buns are fertility symbols which show their connection with summer and fertility. We also have the fire in the furnace. — the fire which represents warmth and light and is connected with fertility and summer-time.)

The girl is employed by an old woman in the Underworld to look after her animals. She milks the cows, is good to the cat and kind to the birds. At the end of the year she receives her reward — a chest which turns out to be full of gold — and with that she returns to her home. (Summer comes back with her riches.)

The stepmother now sends her own wicked daughter out to look for the same good fortune. She also emerges from the well into the meadow and meets the ram, the cow, the fruit-tree and the oven. (She personifies winter and cold, this demonic nature of hers being shown by the way she treats the animals with contempt and keeps away from the symbols that stand for life and fertility.) She is employed by the old woman but is unkind to the animals and does her work badly. At the end of her year she receives as a reward a chest which contains fire. She returns home and when she opens the chest both she and her mother are devoured by the flames. (Winter and cold return to the Earth but are finally conquered by fire, the attribute of Summer.)

This is one example how to argue if one presumes that a *contrast* between two persons in a tale (heroes or gods) is *identical* with a *contrast* in nature such as the changing of the seasons, light and darkness, life and death.

This identification of contrasts in human life and nature is not justified, as there is nothing in the myth or custom which claims to be a symbolic representation, as, for example, the *dramatic* representation of the struggle between Winter and Summer,<sup>4</sup> a primitive play, if you wish.

As there is nothing in the myth material concerning Loki to justify the conclusion that it should be a symbolic representation, I cannot find any acceptable reasons for regarding Loki as a demon of winter and cold. Neither can I find that Dumézil's interpretation of Soslan as a sun god is justifiable, merely because, among other things, he is mentioned in *one* motif in a myth in connection with the months of June and July — i.e. the summer solstice. In the conclusion of the myth in question we read on p. 208: "Soslan se rendit à l'évidence et congédia son armée. *Quant à lui, il égorga un boeuf, vida l'enveloppe du ventre et entra dans ce ventre, juste entre les mois de juin et de juillet*". The translation of the last sentence should be: "As to him (Soslan), he slaughtered an ox, emptied its belly and went inside that belly just between the months of June and July." Allowing for the fidelity of Dumézil's French translation of the Ossetian text one is tempted to compare it with the popular nonsense verses<sup>5</sup> with their partiality for mixing incommensurable magnitudes, and states of time and space, etc.

The creeping into the carcass reminds me of a motif in the stories about Bellman and Eulenspiegel although there is no point in the Ossetian motif as presented here. Bellman, or Eulenspiegel, creeps into a carcass in order to humiliate himself and again be bestowed of the grace of the king.

Whatever the meaning of this motif, it seems to me too optimistic to quote the reference to the months of *June* and *July* as evidence in favour of Soslan being a sun god.

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. LIUNGMAN, Der Kampf zwischen Sommer und Winter.

<sup>5</sup> According to personal communication from G. Dumézil he does not consider it likely that it is a nonsense rhyme, as these rhymes are very uncommon in these Ossetian stories.

### Myth and Cult

The effort to couple tale and myth with religion has sometimes led to the idea of the cult as an illustration of the myth or the myth as a commentary and explanation of the cult. They are thought to be as indissolubly connected with each other as the speech bubbles in our comic strips which explain what it is all about to the reader who might not understand the picture. Let us take Neckel's investigation of Baldr as an example. Neckel has pointed out several interesting parallels between the Baldr myth and myths of classical Greece and the Near East and has stressed the literary connection between Greek and Oriental tradition. But the literary connection is not enough for Neckel — there must also be a cult to accompany the myth in its spread. The distribution of the cult is, so to say, necessary in order to spread the myth.

One cannot, of course, assume that a myth must necessarily be accompanied by a cult, *as other forms of literature*, tale, legend, anecdotes etc. are spread solely because of *their own value as entertainment*. The element of entertainment in the Baldr myth is quite enough to explain its spread. If, parallel to the Baldr myth, a cult has existed, it must be proved from cult and rites — not from the *traditional motifs of the myth*.

Whether a Baldr cult has existed is uncertain.<sup>6</sup> The placenames give no satisfactory guidance in regard to this problem.<sup>7</sup> And whether any of the rites of such a possible cult have been identical with those of the Tammuz cult is even more uncertain. One cannot conclude that the rites of the cults have been identical just because certain epic motifs in the Tammuz myth can be related to similar motifs in the Baldr myth.

The same tendency to see a real background behind myth and legend, also lies behind, for example, Emilia Fogelklou's and Margaret Murray's studies of witches.<sup>8</sup> They reason like this: The stories of witches correspond to each other both in Western Europe and Scandinavia. Since they correspond, there must be

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<sup>6</sup> For the Baldr's grove cf. p. 109 f.

<sup>7</sup> Personal communication from Docent B. Ejder.

<sup>8</sup> FOGELKLOU, *Helgon och häxor*. MURRAY, *The Witch-cult in Western Europe*.



a real cult (devil worship) behind the tales to explain the contents of the legends and the conformities. The fact that it is a question of *traditional* gossip and slander and *traditional types of legends* has not been taken into account. In this connection can be mentioned the types of legends concerning supernatural beings — without any material background in reality — which correspond both in Continental and Scandinavian tradition. A reference can also be made to the long and complicated tales or the *chimerates* which are found from Ireland in the West to Indo-China in the East that have spread without being connected with a cult, only because of their own value.

The above should be sufficient to show that it is this concept of *symbolism* in the myths and the consequential way of analysing the concealed meaning in them, which has led to the many supposed discoveries of cult practices and rites in the myths, legends and tales.

## THE MYTHS AS LITERATURE

In her work on Loki, Gras has pointed out the difficulties in extracting the mythological concepts of Loki because of the material being so abundant in "folkloristic motifs", especially the Baldr myth (cf. above p. 3). I assume that by folkloristic motifs, Gras means traditional narrative material. But if this traditional narrative material is used to draw conclusions as to the character of Loki, the material should primarily be treated as literature, as traditional fiction.

Dumézil, however, dismisses in his work on Loki the literary and historical geographical investigations. This is consistent, as he is of the opinion that the material — in this case the Loki myths — is to be interpreted symbolically and taken as a whole, as a special *phenomenon* which does not lend itself to historical analysis. The material is to be interpreted phenomenologically and not historically (cf. above p. 8 ff.). The student of tradition can certainly not solve the religious historical problems by himself. But I doubt if a scholar of Religion, as Dumézil suggests, can solve successfully, the same problem, without taking into account the material as traditional literature, its geographical distribution and, when possible, the geographical continuity of the motifs.

It would be greatly appreciated if the scholars, who analyse the motifs so critically in order to pronounce them to be included by chance or natural in the context, would be equally critical in their symbolic interpretations of the same motifs. A geographical distance which a moment ago was too great to be spanned by possible cultural contacts, is no longer an obstacle, when the con-

cepts of time and space are disregarded and the explanation is brought over into a psychological, sometimes even a metaphysical plane. Then geographical distribution and historical facts are disregarded — with the understood motivation that the human spirit is the same everywhere and ideas and thoughts are also the same. When it is a question of literary motifs, this philosophy is unrealistic and ultimately founded on concepts of *Elementargedanken* and *spontaneous origin*. One has overlooked the fact that it is not a question of *thoughts* and *concepts of faith* but *fictional motifs* which cannot be told or exist outside a certain epic composition. There is no treasury of motifs from which one can select them. There are only compositions within which the motifs are contained in a certain functional and compositional context. These problems have been discussed in *The Tale as Composition*.<sup>1</sup>

Important in this context is Carney's statement<sup>2</sup> that the author is by no means forced to remain faithful to "the essential element" in the "story pattern" he wishes to use.

Indeed when the purpose of his tale is different to that of his model, one can readily conceive that he must often reject what is essential or fundamental to the earlier tale.

A similar state of affairs occurs, for example, when a folk-tale is to be adapted to a mythological context. Many motifs which are essential to the folk-tale must by necessity drop out or be altered to suit current mythological ideas, which I have had the opportunity to point out in connection with the change of the Cinderella tale in the Greek myth.<sup>3</sup>

This loosening of the order of events in a story is an epic necessity in certain situations, but this change has been interpreted by many scholars as indicating that the motifs are independent parts which can be arranged in different combinations and in infinite variation.

The strong typification of folk-tales and the geographical confinement of the motifs show that fiction has been rigidly bound

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<sup>1</sup> ROTH, *The Cinderella Cycle* p. 237 ff.

<sup>2</sup> CARNEY, *Studies in Irish Literature and History* p. 100. HALLBERG expresses the same idea in *Världsträdet och världsbranden*.

<sup>3</sup> ROTH, *op. cit.* 162 ff.

to its surroundings and tradition. The individual freedom and the author's thrive for originality which one likes to connect with literature, because of its existence in our modern world of writing, is not apparent in the traditional scholastical or popular literature which has been dependent on the scribe's rendering and, perhaps above all, oral transmission. On the contrary! In the Mediaeval scholastical literature as well as in popular, oral tradition the thrive is often the opposite: to follow the predecessors' stories, to refer to other authorities, or to convince the audience that the stories are true and accurate because they were told in this way by the ancestors.

For these reasons, which explain the stability and traditional forms in this kind of literature, we must not dismiss too lightly correspondences of motifs either as "coincidental" or "natural" combinations.

For those who are inclined to dismiss too lightly the chains of motifs as either "coincidental" or "natural" combinations. Carney's words <sup>4</sup> — although used in another context — can serve as a reminder:

But caution, though in itself praiseworthy, can be exaggerated to an extent where it becomes a positive impediment to the study of literature.

### Clerical and Popular, Literary and Oral Tradition <sup>5</sup>

Even for those who interpret the material primarily as literature, there still remain several difficult problems. Thus, for example, the question: What is the importance of the literary and oral traditions? What is clerical or scholastic and what is popular tradition? As the Loki myths have been recorded by men skilled in letters and of broad education in the Thirteenth Century,

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<sup>4</sup> CARNEY, *op. cit.* p. 48.

<sup>5</sup> The problems connected with this question have been skilfully discussed by MURPHY, Duanaire Finn, Appendix A-F. Cf. especially B, Literary Tales and Folkstory-Tellers and C, On the Use of the Words "Literature", "Unlettered" and on the Classes of Story-Tellers Known to Have Existed in Ancient and Mediaeval Ireland.

one can not avoid posing the question: What was the importance of the education of these men and their contact with learned tradition of the Middle Ages for the rendering of the myths?

A sober statement on this point is given by Dag Strömbäck in *Sejd* pp. 4 ff.; 12 and 16. Here Strömbäck gives as his opinion that the Icelandic sagas are products of the artful poetry of the Thirteenth Century. Anne Holtsmark also points out in her introduction to the edition of *Snorra Edda* (p. XIII) that we must remember that Snorri himself was a Christian and a learned man.

In another context (see p. 144 note 81) I have pointed out how much more uncomplicated the study of the North American myth material is in comparison with the European-Asiatic, namely with regard to the relationship between oral and written tradition. In the study of European-Asiatic popular literature the same problem is constantly encountered: To what extent have oral and written traditions influenced one another? This problem has been discussed most keenly by Walter Anderson and Albert Wesselski. While Wesselski was a pure mediaevalist, exclusively and intimately familiar with the literary tradition, Walter Anderson is familiar with all the forms of tradition — literary and oral, clerical and popular —, tales as well as legends. According to Wesselski all popular oral tradition of tale and legend went back to literary prototypes.

If the problem had only been so simple! One needs only, however, observe how the North American Indian myths can show a genetic relationship extending over large areas (from the Mackenzie area to Arizona and New Mexico etc.) where there are no literary prototypes, to understand that the literary tradition cannot explain the distribution. The importance of the oral tradition in North America is a fact which cannot be dismissed. In Europe and Asia it is also obvious, as regards both myths and tales, that there exists an oral popular tradition of widespread distribution, but there is also a strong literary tradition which has influenced, and in its turn been influenced by, the oral tradition. As regards the prose narratives and poems of the Eddas as well as the Skaldic literature, it is obvious that their authors and editors are versed in letters and perfectly familiar with contemporary literature. A comparison of the Eddic prose and poetry with popular oral

tradition shows the former is not a popular (i.e. *vulgus*) but a learned "aristocratic" form of literature. This type of literature represents, in the first place, the *contemporary literary tradition* and only in the second place the popular oral tradition as adapted by literary men. The important question is then which sources have they known and at what time began the literary impulses from abroad to assert themselves.

### **The Importance of Mediaeval European especially British Tradition for Scandinavian Mythology**

As far as possible I have tried in this work to point out the parallels which exist to the different Loki myths. During this process the connection with the British Isles has become especially apparent. The following conformities are worth emphasising:

1. Táin Bó Fraich and Þórsdrápa or the Geirrødr Myth (p. 70 ff.).
2. The Lugh-Balor variants of type Aa 931 and the Baldr Myth (p. 114 ff.).
3. Aided Fergusa and the episode of Loki making the blind Hqðr shoot (p. 110 ff.).
4. Isidore of Seville's Commentary to the Genesis of the Monsters and Loki as the Father of Monsters (p. 162 ff.).
5. The Sons of Turen and the Apples from "the garden of Hisbe" and the apples of Iðunn in the Þjazi Myth (p. 19 ff.).
6. Herebeald and Haeðcyn in Beowulf and the Baldr-Hqðr names pp. 110. 138 ff.).
7. Brosingamene in Beowulf and Brisingamen (p. 53 ff.).

When, therefore, these Old Norse myths show their relationship to Western European or British tradition (i.e. Irish and Anglo-Saxon tradition), I cannot interpret this fact in any other way than that it is a question of a learned epic tradition of "novelles" as well as scholastical tradition which has been borrowed from the British Isles during a period stretching from — possibly — the Eighth Century to the Thirteenth Century when connections with the British Isles were cut off. This does, of course, not mean that Scandinavia during this time did not have any contact with the Continent or Eastern Europe. It is well confirmed by archaeo-

logical finds,<sup>6</sup> through which it has been possible to show that the trade route to Byzantium, used since the Bronze Age, became important again during the Viking Ages.<sup>7</sup> Dag Strömbäck has also pointed out that the compilation work of *Heimskringla* shows sensitive Iceland was to literary influences from abroad.<sup>8</sup> This is a very important statement. I have myself had the opportunity of establishing the importance of Eastern Europe for the Scandinavian tradition of Cinderella before the Thirteenth Century. In the present investigation I have also had reason to stress the well-known fact that *Reginismál* is related to Continental tradition, namely to the episode in Fredegar's *Historia Francorum*, and to point out that *Sörlapáttir* and therewith connected variants must be regarded against the background of the works of Jordanes and others. Thus, although we might find influences from other parts of Europe on the Icelandic tradition still in this investigation its relationship with British literature is remarkable. And this literature comprises not only novelle tradition but also scholarly tradition of the Mediaeval Europe and of the Classical literature.

### Scholarly and Clerical Tradition in the Old Norse Loki Myths

Clerical and Scholastical tradition is found in the following motifs and expressions in the Loki myths summarised here together with the suggested sources or Clerical Mediaeval concepts.

Loki as the father of the *Miðgarðzormr*:

The *Miðgarðzormr* < Leviathan in a Book of Homilies from the Twelfth Century.

*Miðgarðr* < *Middan[g]eard* < *media terrae*.

Loki's children flung out of Heaven < the expelled demons.

Hel made to reign over the Ninth World < the nine[seven] worlds.

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<sup>6</sup> Concerning the relations with Eastern Europe see e.g. ARBMAN, *Svear i Österviking*.

<sup>7</sup> FALK, *Dnjeprforsarnas namn i Kejsar Konstantin VII Porphyrogennetos' De Administrando Imperio* p. 33 ff.

<sup>8</sup> STRÖMBÄCK, *Snorri Sturluson zur 700-Wiederkehr seines Todestages* p. 167. Cf. also STRÖMBÄCK, *En orientalisk saga i fornnordisk dräkt*.

Loki as the father of monsters < Isidore of Seville's Commentary to Cain [Ham] as the father of monsters.

The fettered Loki < the fettered devil.

Muspell and Muspelheim in the apocalypticism of *Völuspá* < Muspilli, which is founded on the Christian Apocalypse. Regarding the agreement as to the individual details between these variants see Olrik's survey (Cf. p. 85).

In the instances summarised above we recognise the influence from Christian Mediaeval tradition upon the Old Norse material. It would be futile to try and show how this influences took place. We must content ourselves to show *that* it did take place, *that* clerical and scholarly as well as secular traditions became part of the Old Norse literature. Even the question *when* may be difficult to answer. Theoretically the influence is possible already in the Eighth or Ninth Century when the influence in art and in the grave goods makes itself evident. It is however necessary to remember that we have no actual proof that literature influenced Scandinavia by this time, that our stories about Loki really existed at that time, as we have no written records before the Twelfth Century.

On the other hand we have good reason to argue that as a strong influence in art and material culture makes itself known already in the Eighth or Ninth Centuries as archaeology has shown, we have reason to think that even an influence on the intellectual and literary side made itself known.

As regards the Old Norse literary material, such as it appears in the Loki myths, one has to take into account the conditions of that age. Scandinavian literature whether dated to the Ninth Century or to the Thirteenth Century must be regarded against the background of other European literature and the intimate relations with the British Isles during that time.

One must not be tempted here to believe that it is foremost a question of Scandinavian popular heathen tradition. Already the literary forms, the elaborate vocabulary and metrics of the Skaldic literature and the epic structure of the Edda literature, indicates that it is not a popular form of writing, but a clerical as well as profane aristocratic form of literature.



Already the supposedly early poems like *Haustlong* from the Ninth Century and *Þórsdrápa* from the Eleventh Century show influence of British tradition, and these poems thus cannot be regarded as pure evidence of Scandinavian heathendom (cf. pp. 20, 74). The importance of the Irish clerical tradition during a period extending from the Seventh to the Tenth Century is well documented, not only in Ireland but also on the European Continent. The Classical learning and knowledge which was preserved in the literary and clerical Irish tradition was passed on through the Irish Christian missionary work.<sup>9</sup> This Irish Golden Age and its impact on the rest of Europe, not least on Scandinavia, where it can also be traced in imported implements as well as in the art of the Ninth Century, can explain why the Scandinavian literature of this time shows a relationship with British material.

From the end of the Eighth Century until the Thirteenth Century the relations between West Scandinavia and the British Isles are striking, while the Continental "acculturation" of Scandinavia does not begin in earnest until the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries.

During the Middle Ages until the end of the Thirteenth Century Norway's connections with England, Scotland and Ireland have been of special importance as regards Trade, Diplomacy, Literature,<sup>10</sup> Religion and Paleography. Concerning the investigation of these problems, the reader is referred to the works of H. Goddard Leach,<sup>11</sup> Bugge,<sup>12</sup> v. Sydow<sup>13</sup> and Christiansen.<sup>14</sup> Leach has

<sup>9</sup> ZIMMER, *The Irish Element in Mediaeval Culture*. Cf. BP 4 p. 144 ff.

<sup>10</sup> LEACH, *Angevin* p. 36, 153, 181. Tomas Johansson, fil. lic. has drawn my attention to the Irish influence on the Icelandic orthography which has been treated by LINDBLAD in *Det isländska accenttecknet*. Further references to the impact of insular writing-customs are found in BRÖNDUM-NIELSEN, *Den nordiska (västnordiska och danska) skriften* pp. 79, 81, 84.

<sup>11</sup> LEACH, *The Relations of the Norwegian with the English Church 1066—1399, and their Importance to Comparative Literature*.

<sup>12</sup> BUGGE, *Nyere Forskninger om Irlands gamle Aandskultur og digtning i dens Forhold til Norden*. Cf. ib. *Norsk sagaskrivning og sagafortælling i Irland* p. 211 where references are given to the results of Todd, Zimmer and Mogk. Cf. also SVEINSSON, *Keltnesk áhrif á íslenzkar ýkjusögur*.

<sup>13</sup> v. SYDOW, *Iriskt inflytande på nordisk guda- och hjältesaga*. Ib. *Tors färd till Utgård*. Cf. MEYER, *Folklore* V p. 299, 1894.

<sup>14</sup> CHRISTIANSEN, *Vikings and Viking Wars in Irish and Gaelic tradition* p. 31.

pointed out to what extent the literary influence was due to commercial and political relations and why, therefore, it ceased at the same time as these were broken off in 1290.

Also Liestöl has brought to attention the fact that the trade relations became of greater importance with the rise of the Hanseatic commercial league and that cultural relations were also influenced by the changed trade relations.<sup>15</sup>

The correspondences shown here between British literature and the Scandinavian Loki myths prove that the latter have been influenced by literature emanating from cultural circles in Mediaeval Western Europe, especially the British Isles. The historical context that can be traced behind these correspondences found in literature confirms and is confirmed by our knowledge of the connections between West Scandinavia and the British Isles.

### General Views on the Old Norse Literary Tradition

There has been a tendency to regard the Old Norse material — as much of it as possible — as rooted in genuine old oral tradition affording a real picture of the philosophy of the Old Germanic race in Scandinavia.

Of course there is good reason for this. The material, the Old Norse literature, gives us two different kinds of information, partly linguistic and partly literary. In the first instance it is quite proper to regard the language as identical to that of the Scandinavian peoples and therefore to that of a part of the Germanic race.<sup>16</sup> The means — that is to say the *language*, in which the literary

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<sup>15</sup> LIESTÖL, Scottish and Norwegian Ballads.

<sup>16</sup> Both ethnologists and linguists shewed in the course of the early research a tendency to regard culture no less than language as static phenomena. To-day it is clear that both these spheres are in a state of continual development — capable of absorbing external influences and ever sensitive to new impulses. At the same time both are governed by tradition and the scholar must continually pay attention to the struggle between the two factors, tradition and new formations. Even if this is a self-evident truth to all ethnologists and linguists, it does not mean that this interpretation is always invoked in individual investigations.

work is expressed — is easily identified with the *literature*. Such identification leads to the view that the literature, that is to say the myths, also must be Germanic, affording evidence of the Germanic tribes and their pagan religion.

As far as the later period is concerned, i.e., the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries, scholars are largely agreed that Scandinavia was subjected to external influence. On the other hand the earlier period, affording archaeological evidence only, is more difficult to treat as subject to such influence; and it is in relation to this earlier epoch that there has been a tendency to regard the material as being of Heathen-Norse origin, expressing a Heathen-Norse religion and philosophy. This tendency can be traced not only in individual monographical investigations presupposing the authenticity of the Heathen-Norse character of the material but also in literary historical works of reference.

Finnur Jónsson<sup>17</sup> thus states that the Norse-Icelandic ethnological group formed a linguistic unit which had received a large part of the Bronze and Iron Age cultures as well as the art of writing as a result of commercial contacts via Denmark with the Germanic tribes and Southern European peoples. In the course of the Fifth, Sixth and Seventh Centuries they became familiar with tales of Germanic heroes and princes, says Finnur Jónsson without giving any further particulars in support of this theory. What he is referring to is the tales of Sigurd and the Nibelungen cycle. Finnur Jónsson thus accepts influence from the Germanic world but denies it from Graeco-Roman mythology, a view which has also been held by K. Müllenhoff, V. Rydberg, G. Stephens. For the two latter Old Norse literature was the inspiration merely in its capacity of Old Norse source.

Finnur Jónsson also rejects Celtic influence as being impossible, on the grounds that the necessary conditions for cultural exchange did not exist at the beginning of the Viking Period. By "necessary conditions" he means long-standing connections in time of peace, a similar spiritual outlook, an inclination in favour of theoretical speculative studies on the part of the Scandinavians as well as mutual linguistic understanding. None of these conditions existed,

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<sup>17</sup> FINNUR JÓNSSON, *Den oldnorske og oldislandske Litteraturs Historie* I<sup>2</sup>.

he says. Whether these conditions are essential for cultural exchange we are in no position to say. If we have any right to lay down conditions of this kind for the spread of culture seems thoroughly uncertain. Also Paasche in his history of literature (p. 29) disregards the influence from Ireland. Paasche pointed out that only one Celtic loan word was known. Ten years later about twenty Celtic loanwords could be counted — see below.

In his literary history Jón Helgason is of the opinion that there exists “a perfectly clear agreement with the preliterate spiritual culture of the Germanic countries”. The runic writing in Helgason’s opinion, cannot be associated with the literature, and books only made their appearance after the introduction of Christianity. He therefore insists that the Icelandic literature is a heathen oral preliterate art, handed down from generation to generation.<sup>18</sup> Evidence for this is that alliteration is to be found in runic inscriptions in Denmark as well as in Norway. From the pictures on Ramsundsberget in Sweden it appears that the story of Sigurd was known. The main part of the literature must therefore be regarded as Heathen and Norse. Helgason claims that the question of Celtic influence is very difficult to assess. We have anthropological investigations which reveal a strong Celtic element in Iceland. Names such as Kormákr and Njáll together with some twenty loan words are cited by him as providing evidence of Celtic influence. Although the colonisation of Iceland was carried out partly from the Norse colonies in the British Isles and not only from Norway, Helgason is of the opinion that “any direct Celtic influence” on Icelandic literature is very problematical. Helgason considers the similarities between Icelandic and Celtic literature of little importance. He describes the Irish tales as being “fantastic, exaggerated, excessive”, the language full of flowery phrases and tending to break into verse. The Icelandic saga he describes as being realistic, sober in language, clear, carefully eschewing everything of a literary nature that seems alien to common speech.<sup>19</sup> But why does he make a comparison with the language of the saga? Why not with the language of the skalds and the Edda, where similarities to the Irish literature undoub-

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<sup>18</sup> JÓN HELGASON, *Norrøn Litteraturhistorie*, p. 11.

<sup>19</sup> *Ib.* p. 120.

tedly appear? Helgason's description of the language of the Irish tales could be aptly applied to that of the Edda.

Since the days of the Nineteenth Century Neo-Romantic movement and its fanciful attitude towards literary material we have grown accustomed to regard the most ancient literature of various countries as an expression of ancestral outlook and temperament. Old Norse literature, the Kalevala and runic poetry, Classical literature — all these have been interpreted as expressions of specifically national characteristics. Where comparisons between them have been attempted, it has mostly been to illustrate how literary creation sets to work. In these contexts the idea of cultural borrowings has won little support.

The establishment of the various literary works as being Norse, Finnish, Classical has in many cases been the supreme objective of the scholar. It would seem that the material was regarded as interesting in proportion to its age and genuine Norse, Finnish, Classical nature. The early dating of the individual literary works may also be due in part to the attempt by scholars to find early evidence of literature and thus for the would-be Norse heathen belief expressed in the work. The early dating increases the likelihood that it is a question of an authentic heathen tradition from a period before Christian influence can be traced.

Whatever date we accept for *Haustlong* and *Pórsdrápa* the fact remains that the kennings show a relationship to Mediaeval European tradition. If we insist upon the dating to the Ninth Century of *Haustlong*, we must also accept an influence on Old Norse literature at this early date.

Why is the material still regarded as nationalistic when there is no longer any nationalistic aspiration behind this view? It is rather a matter of university curriculum studies being based for practical reasons within the national framework that has contributed to this point of view. This confinement to the language and literature of a single country supports and is in turn supported by the older, traditional idea that the Old Norse, Finnish and Classical literature constituted national monuments. The unwillingness to recognise foreign influence may no longer be found in a conscious national effort, but in an unintentional or unconscious limitation, in itself a consequence of the practical limitation

to the national environment — in this case to Scandinavian languages and literature. Only in cases where Germanic studies have provided incontrovertible evidence of literary kinship, as in the case of Sigurd and the Niebelungen cycle, has this influence been accepted as pre-Christian.

The Edda and runic literature were primarily interesting as literary monuments. Inasmuch as literature was appreciated for its own sake or from purely aesthetic aspects, the question of its origin and historical background has awakened little or no interest (cf. Paasche, *Norges og Islands litteratur indtil utgangen av Middelalderen* p. 23 ff., who has dismissed these problems as irrelevant or minor). Whenever they were treated, it was more or less in a playful spirit, as interesting *curiosa* that did not need to be taken very seriously, since after all the main emphasis lay on the literary plane. One has no right to criticize literary historians for treating the material for their own purposes, any more than one can expect the philologist to leave his linguistic domains to discuss the question of cultural influences in Old Norse literature.

The literary historical works quoted above have, however, been regarded as authoritative even in the field of cultural historical problems, even though they were not intended to deal with these problems. Old Norse literature provides, however, an important source not only for literary historians and philologists but also to an equally great extent for ethnologists and religious historians.

On this point Elias Wessén seems to have given the clearest account of the many aspects of the problems arising from the Old Norse Eddic literature and the associated difficulties of judging the various problems from their various qualifications. Wessén also claims that besides general similarities between the Icelandic and Scholastical tradition of the Middle Ages no direct relations can be pointed out. Nor is this to be expected, says Wessén, because "unlike all the other Europeans of the Middle Ages the Icelanders were exceedingly independent in their adoption of the Classical and Ecclesiastical culture."<sup>20</sup>

If we wish to regard Old Norse literature not only as literature or from an aesthetic standpoint but rather as a source for Old Norse

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<sup>20</sup> WESSÉN, *Codex Regius of the Younger Edda* p. 3.

religion, then it is necessary in the first place to bring Old Norse literature into relation with Mediaeval literature from outside Scandinavia. If we do not so we shall form a totally misleading picture of Old Norse belief and literature, because the Middle Ages saw the introduction of material which subsequently was associated with the Old Norse gods and thereafter identified as native Scandinavian and interpreted accordingly.

A fresh approach to the problems can be treated in Sven F. B. Janson's presentation of Old Norse literature,<sup>21</sup> where it is asserted that the lines of the Rök stone were composed in a literary atmosphere akin to that of the Norse Icelandic literature. Later on Janson points out the considerable literary interest attaching to the word *iarmundgrund* which occurs in a kenning. This can be cited as an example of the uniform character of the poetic language — not only in the Norse world. Janson shows that this word, in the same or related forms, occurs in the Hildebrand Lay, Beowulf, Völuspá, Grímnismál.<sup>22</sup>

Janson's remark is of the greatest interest in relation to the cultural context suggested by "the uniform character of the poetic language" even as regards the world outside the Norse regions. It allows us to glimpse literary contacts with the contemporary European world. Carney's opinion is worth citing in this connection:

In the nineteenth century there was interaction between French, English and Russian literature. This interaction had no connection whatsoever with the degree of racial affinity that exists between the three peoples. Rather does it exemplify a general rule that a story or a literary technique evolved in linguistic group A may become equally the property of linguistic group B through the activity of a small bilingual element in either population. All that is necessary is geographical proximity or some form of cultural contact. Of these two things cultural contact is the more important.<sup>23</sup>

The present investigations on the Loki myths show an influence from cultural circles in Europe, above all from the British Isles, which have affected supposedly ancient works such as Haustlong

<sup>21</sup> Ny illustrerad svensk litteraturhistoria 1 p. 10.

<sup>22</sup> Ib. p. 15.

<sup>23</sup> CARNEY, Studies in Irish Literature and History p. 84.

and Þórsdrápa. The results presented here of the effects of cultural influence from Europe on Old Norse literature as it appears in the Loki myths are supported by Janson's and Carney's remarks on the uniform character of the poetic language (not only in the Norse regions) and the early links in European literature.

The results I have arrived at in this investigation show the greater part of the Loki myths to be international material, subsequently linked with the Loki figure in Scandinavia. This result has its bearing on the interpretation of the Loki figure. It shows that Loki as a "phenomenon" is not a "static religious idea" but that, like all the other cultural elements, he has been subjected to a development culminating in the kaleidoscopic trickster character.



## CONCLUSION AND GENERAL SUMMARY

It may seem that this presentation is not as clear as those where all the myths are collected describing for instance the evil character of Loki. In that type of work the layout presents the different aspects of the Loki figure: Loki as the companion of Óðinn or Þórr, Loki as the enemy of the Asa gods. Another type of investigation stresses those traits which indicate that Loki has been a fire demon, another those suggesting that Loki have been a water spirit. The presentation indeed gains in clarity in these instances and the intentions of the authors are presented to the reader in a pleasing form. But the author starts off with a hypothesis which he proceeds to prove with that part of the heterogenous Loki material which may suit his argument, without explaining why the rest of the material is not authentic for the Loki figure.

The scope of the present study has been:

1. to collate all the myths where Loki appears
2. to show if and how these Loki myths are related to other Mediaeval expressions of literature
3. to deduce from this which myths may be part of a common European tradition and which peculiar to Scandinavian tradition. It seems necessary to start by analysing the myths as literature in order to find out which Loki myths may be identified as originally Scandinavian and which therefore may give a true picture of the authentic Loki figure.

### History and Methods (pp. 1—12)

A survey is given of the most important contributions to the investigation of the Old Norse god Loki. It is also stressed that it

is necessary to treat the material — i.e. the individual myths about Loki — as fiction or literature and that each myth must be considered and compared with other contemporary European literatures. This is an ethnological criticism of the sources which in its way is as important as the philological textual criticism. It is necessary in order to try to separate those myths belonging to a common European tradition from those which may be labelled Old Norse and therefore are possible sources for the study of authentic Loki traits. To the latter group of myths and motifs we may subsequently compare the modern material about the sayings of the mythical Locke to investigate if, and in what way, there may be correspondences between the Old Norse traditions about Loki and the popular mythical Locke in the later material.

### *Loki in the Myths of the Provider and Re-Provider*

I have transferred to one group those myths in which Loki is acting as provider; a role which is part of the trickster figure. This group comprises the following chapters 1—6.

#### 1. The Þjazi Myth (pp. 13—27)

The investigation shows that the Þjazi myth is composed of different material:

- a. Motifs from an origin myth of the killing of a giant (from whose body the world is created).
- b. The Classical tale of the Hesperian Apples in its Irish form, i.e. the Sons of Turen.
- c. Motifs from popular folk tales.

The Classical tale of the Hesperian Apples is the pattern on to which the above mentioned traits have been wovven into an epic narrative.

It is of significance that *Hastlong*, which tells the myth of Þjazi contains three kennings:

1. Loki as the father of the Fenrisúlfr.
2. Loki as the thief of the Brísingamen.
3. Loki (as the) fettered.

These kennings indicate that the author of *Haustlong* was familiar with:

1. the popular Mediaeval story of the Father of the Monsters or the Genesis of the Monsters.
2. The popular Mediaeval tale of the cursed jewel, e.g. *Brosinga mene* in *Beowulf*.
3. The concept of the fettered Devil popular in the Mediaeval tradition and art or the Classical tradition of the bound Prometheus.

This goes to show that the author of *Hastlong* was not only familiar with the Irish form of the Classical tale of the Hesperian Apples but also with contemporary Mediaeval literature.

## 2. *Reginismál* and the *Andvari* Myth (pp. 28—34)

This myth shows a relationship between the tale of Siegfried and a Mediaeval story told in Fredegar's *Historia Francorum*. Without counterpart in other Scandinavian stories is the part where Loki borrows Rán's net in order to catch the pike *Andvari*.

## 3. The *Ásgarðr* Myth (pp. 35—41)

This chapter shows that the *Ásgarðr* myth is a variant of the Masterbuilder legend. The incitement to the humorous rendering of Loki as the mother of Sleipnir may have come from the motifs of this myth. The Sleipnir story has given cause to much discussion and it has been considered as an authentic trait for the Loki figure, i.e. the bisexual character of Loki.

The present investigation has particularly treated comparative material because most of the earlier investigations have been less interested, if at all, in the non-Scandinavian material.

The stanzas 25 to 26 from *Völuspá* have been taken as evidence that *Völuspá* refers to the *Ásgarðr* myth. I have suggested, on the contrary, that they refer to the incident known in the Irish version of the *Thebaid* of Apollo avenging his dead beloved and also of his sending of pestilence as punishment (cf. p. 152). The pestilence then would correspond to "*laevi blandit*". In *Völuspá* and in the Irish version of the *Thebaid* (*Togail na Tebe*) both these incidents are the introduction to the following tale, which belongs to type 931, *The King's Prophesied Death*.

#### 4. **Sif's Hair and the Treasures of the Asa Gods** (pp. 42—47)

No parallels to this myth are found outside Scandinavia, but a reference is made to the general likeness to other tales of mysterious forging and founding. It is also discussed whether the punishment of sewing together Loki's lips is a more original motif which has later been replaced by the motif of the chaining to the rocks, a motif which is partly borrowed from Classical tradition.

#### 5. **Sqrlapátttr** (pp. 48—55)

The investigation shows that, because of the names and the motifs connected with these stories, Sqrlapátttr is a variant of the popular Eormenic tale as told by Beowulf, Jordanes and Saxo. This Mediaeval story of the cursed jewel has, in Old Norse tradition, been attached to the Loki figure and other Old Norse gods. Loki plays the same part as the treacherous Bikke.

#### 6. **The Fetching of the Hammer or the Myth of the Stolen Thunder Implement** (pp. 56—59)

The relationship is discussed between this myth and corresponding myths of the stolen thunder implement in Lappish, Finnish and Estonian tradition.

The story of the stolen thunder implement is a traditional type which in Thompson's Type of the Folktale is numbered 1148 B and its geographical distribution area seems to be Scandinavia and Eastern Europe. The variants of the folksong, Trymlur (Fifteenth Century) and Torsvisa — the Song of Þórr — (Sixteenth Century) are based on the Þrymskviða. Although there are signs of individual artistic treatment in Þrymskviða, its plot is of the traditional theme of type 1148 B. When this story is attached to Loki he has to become the servant of the Thundergod — a role that belongs to this type of story and thus cannot be regarded as an authentic trait of the Loki figure (cf. p. 186). Also in the Geirrøðr myth and the Útgarrøðr myth Loki is the companion of the Thundergod. Here this role does not belong to the story and it could then mean that the role — in this connection — could be an authentic trait, but it may just as well only be a loan from the popular Þrymskviða.

*Loki in Other Myths***7. The Geirrøðr Myth** (pp. 60—76)

The form of this myth in Scandinavian tradition as well as in the dubious tradition in Kreuzwald's Estonian text (p. 68) is discussed. The influence of the Mediaeval katabasis tradition on the description of the Journey to the Underworld is also treated here. Of special importance is the fact that the Geirrøðr myth in many motifs shows a relationship to the Irish novelle *Táin Bó Fraich*. A comparison is made of the sequence of events and of the similar motifs in the two stories.

Both Þórr and Froech are tricked weaponless into dangerous waters. Froech is aided by his bride who gives him his sword. In the Old Norse myth the giantess Gríðr helps Þórr with a staff (belt and gloves) with which he manages to ford the river. Froech fetches the rowan branch — in the Irish novelle a coloristic motif: red rowan against his white face and black hair. In the rough and drastic Old Norse story Þórr reaches for the rowan tree when rescuing himself from the Vimur river. The spear thrown by Findabair's father — which Froech catches in the flight and throws back — corresponds to the red hot iron bar which Geirrøðr throws at Þórr and which he catches in the flight with his iron gloves and which he returns thereby stabbing Geirrøðr.

The cryptic motifs in the Old Norse myth and the unusual circumstances in which Þórr is placed is explained if we consider *Táin Bó Fraich* as the source of the Old Norse myth. If we do this it follows that no particular significance may be attached to the reference of the Rowan as Þórr's help in the Old Norse mythology. This motif in the Old Norse as well as in the Lappish and Finnish mythology then provides a reference to an incident borrowed from an Irish Novelle and lacks mythological significance. This would be of importance in warning against too ready acceptance of notices in the myths as original heathen concepts in the Old Norse tradition and religion. A kenning thus may be only a reference to a special situation in a story which is based on a foreign model and adapted to the Old Norse mythology, whence it has spread to Lappish and Finnish tradition.

### 8. The Askr and Embla Myth

As Lóðurr has been identified with Loki his part in this myth has been considered of particular importance. Lóðurr created the first man and woman with the assistance of Óðinn and Hœnir. This notice has lead many scholars to consider Loki as a creator. However, this myth is a variant of a special creation story and therefore is of no importance to the constitutive character of the Loki-Lóðurr figure.

### 9. Loki in the Útgarðr Myth

Several authors have already stressed the influence of Celtic tradition on this myth, which consists of three episodes, the slaughter of Þórr's billy-goats, the Skrímir episode and the Visit to Útgarðr. Even in the first part of the myth, i.e. the slaughter of Þórr's billy-goats, we have reason to believe that influence from Celtic tradition is present. In any case this episode must be considered as belonging to Mediaeval and clerical tradition.

The description of Útgarðaloki in Saxo's story as the fettered Devil corresponds in its *name* on the one hand to *Loki* and on the other hand to the Mediaeval concept of the *Devil as fettered* in the abyss. The fettered Loki is here a concept which has its counterpart in Mediaeval Christian as well as in Classical tradition. Here is also mentioned the rich Mediaeval material on the *fettered Devil* who according to Christian tradition is awaiting the end of the world in the abyss. This is compared to Loki's role as the fettered Enemy in Völuspá's Baldr myth as well as in the kenning in Haustlång and in the Baldr myth of Snorri and of Lokasenna.

The Christian influence felt in the story of the fettered Loki forces us to consider Christian influence on Völuspá not only in the Baldr myth but also in the introduction and the ending of Völuspá. I have tried to show its connection with Mediaeval literature such as Muspilli, the Destruction of Da Derga's Hostel, Pseudo-Bede and ultimately Pistis Sophia. This relationship makes it necessary to regard Völuspá with a certain suspicion as a source for authentic Old Norse heathen concepts. In the motif of the fettered Loki both Classical and Christian tradition makes itself felt. If the dating of Haustlång to the Ninth or Tenth Cen-

tury is correct. this implies that the Christian and Classical influence was manifest in the Scandinavian literature already at that time.

#### 10. **The Baldr Myth** (pp. 90—161)

This long and heterogenous myth consists of the different parts, 1—5, of which Snorri's story of Baldr is composed.

*Parts 1—2* (pp. 101—140). I have tried to show that Parts 1—2 of the Baldr myth belongs to the tale of The King and his Prophesied Death also known as the Oedipus tale (type Aa 931) without the incest motif. Parts from the Christian Passion have been added to its introduction as shown already by Bugge. This is stressed to such an extent that Baldr is regarded as a kind of White Christ in Snorri's works, but there are no traces of such a part for Baldr in the other variants of the Baldr myth. The Lament of Nature at the Death of Christ in the Passion story has become in part 4 of the Baldr myth of Snorri the Lament of Nature at the Death of the god Baldr.

Although influence from the Christian Passion is felt the skeleton of Snorri's Baldr story is, however, the tale of the King and his Prophesied Death. By means of a dream or a prophecy it is revealed that the hero will die in a certain way. By taking extensive precautions the family tries to prevent the fulfillment of Fate. Thus the gods made all things swear not to harm Baldr, but the Mistilteinn was overlooked.

In part 2, the core of which also is Type 931, I have tried to show its connection with Oriental as well as with European variants of this type.

Because the motif of the invulnerability has been commented upon by many scholars and compared to the most varied stories where this motif is found, I have pointed out that this motif as such has four different forms which appear in different types of stories. Therefore the motif of invulnerability is insufficient to establish a relationship to other stories in which it occurs. In addition other motifs must at the same time be present both in the story of Baldr's death and in the story we want to compare with before sufficient evidence of relationship may be ascertained.

A similarity to a sufficient number of motifs in the Baldr myth I have shown to be present in the interrelated British stories about Balor's death and about Fergus's death of type 931. The Baldr myth is also related to the Thebaid, the Classical prototype to the Irish Togail na Tebe, which like these two British stories is a variant of type 931. Togail na Tebe with its prophesied tragedy, the impossibility of avoiding Fate, and finally the journey to the land of the Dead corresponds to Völuspá's and Snorri's Baldr myth.

Because of the correspondence in details between the British and the Scandinavian traditions, I have drawn the conclusion that the story of Baldr's death has either been borrowed or at least strongly influenced by these British stories. However it has not been possible to decide whether the Anglo-Saxon or the Celtic literature has been the source of the Old Norse Baldr myth. It seems as if both have influenced the Scandinavian tradition. Examples are on the one hand the Anglo-Saxon tradition of *Here-beald* and *Hæðcyn* and the word *Mistilteinn*, on the other hand in the Irish tradition the combination *Balor-Lugh, the death of Fergus and the blind slayer, the missdirected weapon and the hardened holly*.

The supposed importance of the Misteltoe has made it important for me to try to show that there is nothing to substantiate the theory that the Misteltoe is a fertility plant, which, were it true, would indicate that Baldr was a fertility god which, with another rush conclusion, would connect Baldr with Oriental Fertility Gods.

*Part 3* (pp. 140—142) of the Baldr story has not been much commented upon here as Loki does not appear in this part. I have only stressed that the author of *Húsdrápa*, usually ascribed to the Tenth Century, must have had some knowledge of the story of Baldr's death.

*Part 4* (pp. 142—149) may be said to be a variant of the Orpheus myth of the Journey to the Land of the Dead to bring back a beloved dead person. Also in this part the Old Norse tradition follows the pattern of the Thebaid as related in the Irish Togail na Tebe.

*Part 5a* (pp. 149—156). Here I have tried to show that verses 23—36 in Völuspá also belong to the Baldr myth which follows in verses 31—39. The motifs in these verses are related to similar



motifs in the Thebaid which like Snorri's and Völuspá's Baldr myth are variants of the King and his Prophesied Death.

It has also been indicated that although the earliest sources have been familiar with the motif of the fettered Loki, this is a motif common to both Christian and Classical traditions, which has been secondarily attached to the Scandinavian Loki figure.

In view of the great importance that scholars have attached to Loki and Baldr because of their roles in the Old Norse Baldr myth, it has been necessary to stress that this myth is nothing but a variant of the popular Mediaeval story of The King and his Prophesied Death as told in Togail na Tebe, which is founded on the Classical Thebaid, and in the stories of Balor's death and Fergus' death.

*Part 5 b* (pp. 156—161). Here is discussed the relationship of the netmaking in the Finnish runes of the Fire fish with the Old Norse tradition of the invention of the first net. This myth seems to be a Scandinavian-Finnish aetiological myth of the first net. Of all the heterogeneous material of the Baldr myth this myth of Loki's invention of the net is the one and only part which could reasonably be authentic with regard to the Scandinavian Loki figure.

#### 11. **Loki as the Father of Monsters** (pp. 162—175)

This story of Loki is related to the contemporary Christian tradition about the Origin of the Monsters. When drawing conclusions about the authentic trait in the Loki figure it is most necessary to remember that the Origin of the Demons in the Mediaeval Christian literature was one of the most debated questions. These traditions go back primarily to Isidore of Seville and his commentary to the Genesis. The Christian myths about the origin of the Monsters in their turn go back to Oriental tradition. The myth is closely connected to the myth of the fallen demons (p. 164) also originally an Oriental story which through Christian transmission was brought into scholarly tradition and the literature of Mediaeval Europe. Because of the popularity of this story as well as that

of the fallen demons it is reasonable that scholastical Mediaeval tradition was the source for the myth of Loki and his expelled children.

The Old Norse tradition has its counterpart in Finland where it is included in the Finnish Runic poetry in the form of Louhi and her demon children. Some of the demons seem to have been identified with hypostates of sicknesses or certain impediments or illnesses.

As the Old Norse tradition, particularly Snorri, tell of the Fall of the Demons, the Father of the Monsters, the Ninth World and the *Miðgarðzormr* all concepts found in Mediaeval Christian tradition we must regard these stories as coming from the Mediaeval scholastic tradition and secondarily transferred to the Old Norse gods.

## 12. **Lokasenna** (pp. 176—181)

The poetical part of Lokasenna has only a general likeness to the satirical works of Lucian. No direct prototype for this has been found in the Mediaeval satiric legend poesi, the closest parallel being Hans Pfriem by Hayneccius as already suggested by Krohn.

A couple of motifs in Lokasenna, e.g. the sworn brotherhood of Loki and Óðinn, the alliance of Loki and Sif, have no known parallels.

The prose parts of Lokasenna constitute a variant of the Baldr myth part 5 b and as such it has been treated in connection with the Baldr myth.

## **Summary of the Analyses of the Motifs** (pp. 182—188)

In this chapter the results of the individual myth investigations are assembled. Together with that rest of motifs to which no direct parallels are found outside Scandinavia, Loki's transformation into different animals is discussed. As there is no correlation or coordination between the different transformations we have no reason to regard them as authentic traits. The various shapes such as flea, fly, bird, fish, old woman, mare are only determined by

the special situations in the different tales. It is the epic course of events which determines into what kind of disguise Loki will appear. It is not original traits or constitutive traits in the Loki figure which are expressed here which connects Loki with any special kind of animals and it gives no information about the presumed bisexual character of Loki.

The investigation has shown what a flowering bewilderment of non-Scandinavian material there has grown around the Loki figure. When we peel off this material of tales, anecdotes, Mediaeval hero tales, and clerical traditions all belonging to a common stock of stories, we are left with two things: the myth of Sif's Hair and the Treasure of the Asa Gods and the *catch episodes* inserted in the various myths.

As a result of the different investigations presented in this chapter we can distinguish three groups of motifs which may have bearing upon the Loki character and they are:

1. Loki as the foster brother of Óðinn (Lokasenna).
2. Loki as the companion of the Thundergod (the Geirrøðr myth and Þórsdrápa, the journey to Útgarðr in Þrymskviða).
3. Loki as the inventor of the net and his connection with the catch myths (Snorri's Baldr myth, Reginsmál and the Andvari myth, Lokasenna and the myth of Sif's hair).

Of these three groups it is only in the third that we can find a corresponding concept in the popular later oral tradition of Scandinavia. To Loki as the inventor of the net we may correlate the modern Scandinavian recordings of the mythical *Locke* and the appellation *locke* which means spider (or spiderlike insects). Subsequently the identity of *Locke* and *Loki* is discussed.

Up to this point the investigation of the Old Norse Loki myths is a finished entity, an investigation which has attempted to show influences in the Old Norse Loki myth from contemporary European literature in order to separate what are secondary traits transferred to the Loki figure from external sources. There remains the above mentioned small group of myth material for which I have not been able to find European parallels and which, therefore, is the only material which may be authentic for the Old Norse Loki figure.

From a methodological point of view it is often insisted that material from an earlier time may not be used to explain the modern tradition, nor may material from one cultural area be used to explain that of another area. Great prudence in such comparisons are evidently needed, but unfortunately the criticism has often been interpreted in a definitely negative way — no comparison is allowed between material from times which are separated by some hundreds of years or from areas separated by some hundreds of miles.

However, if no comparisons are made we would never be able to decide whether or not there is a relationship in the extant material. Furthermore the result would always be one and the same, i.e. spontaneous origin and parallelism without genetic relationship.

Disregarding this misunderstood claim on methodology the investigation turns to the problem of the modern material. In the following chapters I discuss the modern recordings of *Locke* and *locke*=the spider and the spider's role as trickster in other cultures in order to show how we may correlate the constitutive elements in the Old Norse myths with the modern Scandinavian material.

### **Loki and the Trickster Figure (pp. 189—193)**

The general character of the trickster figure is discussed, and an attempt is made to analyse how the trickster figure is moulded from the ways and the circumstances in the story telling. A comparison is made to the forming of the Bellman character from the different stories attached to Bellman's name and secondarily giving him a character which was never his original one. The explanation of this character lies not in the individual who lends his name to the stories, but in the formation of cycles in the art of story telling, e.g., the romantic cycle about King Arthur and his court, the cycles of anecdotes about Eulenspiegel, Nasreddin Hodscha, and Coyote etc.

The people who tell the stories or listen to them have no reason to analyse the trickster figure. Only when a scholar starts to make

a syncretistic picture out of the central character of the stories it assumes a complex and dualistic nature.

### **Loki, Locke and the Net** (pp. 194—210)

What kind of being is it then that can be made into a trickster? The answer to this question often lies in the very *name* of the trickster. The Trickster figure alternates between an anthropomorph and a theriomorph being depending upon what the story demands. It is the same as in the animal fables where the animals live and behave like human beings. It follows from the name of the Trickster that, even if he appears in human disguise, the animal form is the primary one. Loki is the central character in the Old Norse myth cycles of humorous tales and provider myths which have all lent him traits and character. But what then was Loki originally if all these traits only are borrowed from roles in different myths? Here again the answer should be sought in the name *Loki*, identical with *locke* i.e. the name of the spider. The identity of Loki and Locke is established by the Torsvisa where Loki has the popular name *Locke* i.e. the name for the spider and the mythical being. It is true that today the name Locke for spider is found only in a limited area in Sweden, whence it will probably disappear entirely in the near future. As the name Locke for the spider and spiderlike insects also occurs outside Sweden in Finland, Esthonia and the Faeroes as well as in Mediaeval Swedish, it is probable that the name *Locke* for spider in the Middle Ages had a wider geographical distribution than it has today.

The existence of two cycles in Scandinavia, one consisting of myths about Loki, the other consisting of sayings about Locke, indicates that there is a connection between the two head figures in the cycles and that the trickster-spider lies behind both.

As the only known meaning of *Locke* is spider and as some of the sayings evidently refer to the *spider* — (*Locke*) — and his nets, I draw the conclusion that this was the original meaning of the mythical Locke and of the god Loki, who are identical in the existing variants of Torsvisa.

In a special section references are given to the spider-trickster in other cultures from which may be seen that the spider was allotted a place as trickster in other cultures as well.

### **The Evil Loki and the Symbolic Interpretation of the Myths**

(pp. 211—218)

In this chapter there is a discussion on the tendency to interpret the material as sources of heathen myths and cults, particularly the identification of symbols with the actors of the story. Thus the identification of Loki as a demon of cold and darkness — because of his part in the Baldr story and as the Father of the Monsters — is refuted here. In contrast it is pointed out that variants of the popular tale of the King and his Prophesied Death and clerical concepts of the Genesis of the Monsters have been used in these myths. Secondly Loki has got his character from his unsympathetic role in these myths and then the scholars have identified this “evil” character of his as a symbol for cold and darkness, hostility to warmth and light and fertility.

### **The Myths as Literature** (pp. 219—233)

This chapter gives a survey both of that profan and clerical material in the Loki myths which shows connections to the British tradition. Because of the repeated agreement between the British and the Scandinavian literature I draw the conclusion that this correspondance is due to influences from the British Isles on the Scandinavian tradition from the Ninth to the Thirteenth Century.

As no manuscripts are older than the Thirteenth Century no accurate dating of the Loki myths is possible. The historically as well as archeologically established relations between the British Isles and Scandinavia from the Ninth to the Thirteenth Century makes it likely that also the literature has been influenced during this time.

A special section, General Views on the Old Norse Literature, describes the traditional attitude of the handbooks in which the

Old Norse material is considered to represent authentic heathen Old Norse literature and philosophy. An attempt is made to analyse the cause of this attitude.

An important result of the present investigation is the demonstration of those myths in the Old Norse mythology which show that there has been intimate connections between Scandinavia and foreign countries. In this material the relation to the British Isles has been particularly pronounced. I have therefore drawn the conclusion that the Old Norse literature treated here, to a large extent has been influenced from the British Isles. This has an indirect significance for the Loki figure in that many of the stories in which Loki appears are not authentic Old Norse religious beliefs but material borrowed from British literature between the Eighth or Ninth and Thirteenth Century.

The investigation could have stopped at this point concluding with the results just mentioned. However, I have preferred to go further in trying to interpret the Loki figure from the results arrived at and from the knowledge of the modern material. The existence of the spider-trickster in other cultures, Loki's character as a trickster and the connection between the name of Loki and *Locke*=spider have all accumulated to give the interpretation of *Locke-Loki* as an anthropomorphisation and deification of the spider. It seems to me that this interpretation very well deserves a place among the other explanations of the Loki character.

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AASF=Annales academix scientiarum fennicæ.  
AASU=Annales academix Regiæ scientiarum upsal.  
ABUU=Acta bibliothecæ universitatis upsaliensis.  
ANF=Arkiv för nordisk filologi.  
ANO=Aarbøger for nordisk Oldkyndighed og Historie.  
AO=Archiv Orientální. Journal of the Czechoslovak Oriental Institute, Prague.  
AR=The Archæological Review.  
ARW=Archiv für Religionswissenschaft vereint mit den Beiträgen zur Religionswissenschaft der religionswissenschaftlichen Gesellschaft in Stockholm.  
ASR=The American-Scandinavian Review.  
AUG=Acta universitatis gothoburgensis.  
AUL=Acta universitatis lundensis. N.S. 1.  
AUU=Acta universitatis upsaliensis.  
B=Béaloideas. The journal of the Folklore of Ireland Society.  
BAIS=Bulletin de l'Académie impériale des sciences de St. Pétersbourg.  
BP=Bolte, J. & Polívka, G., Anmerkungen zu den Kinder- und Hausmärchen der Brüder Grimm.  
BS=The Bollingen Series.  
BSEO=Bulletin de la Société d'Etudes Océaniques.  
BVV=Beiträge zur Volks- und Völkerkunde.  
CFMA=Les classiques français du moyen âge.  
CFQ=California Folklore Quarterly.  
CR=The Celtic Review.  
DS=Danske Studier.  
EETS=Early English Texts Society.  
FFC=FF Communications. Ed. for the Folklore Fellows.  
FLJ=The Folk-Lore Journal.  
FoF=Folkminnen och Folktankar.



FUF=Finnish-Ugrische Forschungen. Zeitschrift für finnisch-ugrische Sprach- und Volkskunde.

Hdwb d A=Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens.

IHK=Thurneysen, R., Die irische Helden- und Königsage bis zum siebzehnten Jahrhundert.

ITS=Irish Texts Society.

IUPFS=Indiana University Publications. Folklore Series.

IUS=Indiana University Studies.

JAFL=Journal of American Folklore.

LUF=Institutionen för folklivsforskning vid Lunds Universitet, Lund.

MAR=Mythology of All Races.

MLA=The Modern Language Association of America.

MLUF=Meddelanden från Lunds universitets folkminnesarkiv.

PAAAS=Proceedings of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

PBA=Proceedings of the British Academy.

PBB=Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur. Hrsg. Paul & Braune.

PMLA=Publications of the Modern Language Association of America.

QSGV=Quellen und Forschungen zur Sprach- und Culturgeschichte der germanischen Völker.

RC=Revue celtique.

RIA=Royal Irish Academy.

RTP=Revue des traditions populaires.

RVV=Religionsgeschichtliche Versuche und Vorarbeiten. Hrsg. Dietrich & Wünsch.

SAOB=Ordbok över svenska språket utgiven av Svenska Akademien.

SBAW=Sitzungsberichte der bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften. Philos.-hist. Abt.

SKAW=Sitzungsberichte der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften. Philos.-hist. Klasse.

SPAW=Sitzungsberichte der preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften.

SSO=Studier fra Sprog- og Oldtidsforskning ud. af det philologisk-historiske Samfund.

SU=Svensk Uppslagsbok. Andra omarbetade och utvidgade uppl.

TBF=Táin Bó Fraich.

ULMA=Landsmåls- och folkminnesarkivet i Uppsala.

VFA=Västsvenska folkminnesarkivet, Göteborg.

WUS=Washington University Studies.

WVM=Wienner völkerkundliche Mitteilungen.

ZCP=Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie.

ZDA=Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Literatur.

ZDMS=Zeitschrift für deutsche Mythologie und Sittenkunde.

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